National Refugee Survey

PRELIMINARY REPORT PHASE I: GAUTENG

RESEARCHED FOR THE

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

BY THE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The number of refugees and asylum seekers entering South Africa, particularly from other parts of Africa, has risen steadily since the advent of democracy in 1994 and the proliferation of conflict in other parts of the continent. We know very little about these communities, their experiences in South Africa, as well as their priority needs and concerns. To date, neither the South African government, NGOs nor the UNHCR has undertaken any study to begin to address these issues.

In order to begin the process of acquiring reliable empirical baseline data, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) commissioned the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (C A S E) in December 2001 to undertake a survey of asylum seekers and refugees in South Africa. This study focuses on asylum seekers and refugees from Africa, as they constitute the majority of the refugee population. As originally proposed, the study was meant to collect data from the five cities where Refugee Reception Offices are located, namely Pretoria, Johannesburg, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Durban. However, due to limited funding, the current study focuses on Pretoria and Johannesburg only.

This study has the following main objectives:

1. To provide reliable empirical data on asylum seekers and refugees to national government departments to pursue the development of integrated and coherent policy on service provision to asylum seekers and refugees;
2. To provide reliable empirical data (i.e. demographics, social and economic indicators, information on coping/survival mechanisms & strategies) of asylum seekers and refugees to NGOs, service providers and other organisations working in the field to help them identify priority needs and concerns, thereby helping to inform their activities and monitor existing government practices;
3. To assess more accurately where education and awareness-raising intervention is required; and
4. To increase the knowledge of human rights and responsibilities of asylum seekers and refugees, and improve knowledge of and access to remedial mechanisms and facilitation services.

METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the above objectives, C A S E used a survey instrument to collect information from 600 asylum seekers and refugees. Half of these respondents, namely 300, were interviewed in Johannesburg and the other half in Pretoria. In order to design the sampling frame for the study, we relied on refugee and asylum seeker

statistics obtained from UNHCR but compiled by the National Department of Home Affairs for the first quarter of 2002. African countries were selected proportionally, in order to mirror the refugee and asylum seeker population nationally.

To develop the survey questionnaire, C A S E convened a reference group made up of representatives of UNHCR, its implementing partners, refugees, as well as other service providers, who provided valuable input into this process. After a series of drafts, the questionnaire was finalised and piloted with refugees to ensure the clarity and wording of questions.

One of the aims of this study was to ensure that some capacity building and resources were directed to the refugee communities on which we focused our study. For this reason, most of the interviewers for this study were refugees themselves, while a minority were South African. In order to select interviewers, C A S E contacted established refugee forums and organisations, in both Johannesburg and Pretoria and formally requested them to nominate refugees, from the communities represented in these forums, who would be able to act as interviewers. Once the selection of interviewers was finalised, a 2-day training session was conducted with interviewers in each of the two cities. The training was first conducted in Johannesburg, followed by the training in Pretoria one week later.

C A S E relied on two different methods, namely community-based interviews and interviews at the Refugee Reception Offices in Johannesburg and Pretoria to interview respondents. In each city, on average half of the interviews were conducted at community level and half at the Refugee Reception Offices. During the interviewing phase, interviewers were asked to submit questionnaires on an ongoing basis to their supervisors. Upon receipt of the questionnaires, supervisors checked each one of them before the data was captured.

MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

A total of 298 questionnaires were completed in Johannesburg and 292 in Pretoria. This brought the total for the two cities to 590 questionnaires.

There was an even spread of asylum seekers and refugees in our sample. In addition, 9% of respondents indicated that they used to be refugees and now have been given asylum seeker documents again. Respondents from Congo-Brazzaville, DRC and Ethiopia were significantly more like to be asylum seekers than respondents from any other countries.

Age

The average age of respondents in our sample was 30 years. Respondents from Rwanda, Somalia and DRC tended to be slightly older than respondents from all other countries in the sample, while Angolan respondents tended to be amongst the youngest. Female respondents were significantly more likely to be younger than male respondents.

Marital status

Half of the respondents in our sample indicated that they are single. Male respondents were significantly more likely to be single, while female respondents tended to be separated, divorced or widowed. Considering that Angolan respondents were amongst the youngest in our sample, it is not surprising that they were the most likely to be single, while Rwandan and Somali respondents, who tended to be older, were the most likely to be married and living together with their partners.

Fluency in English

Over two thirds of respondents indicated that they are fluent in English. In particular, respondents from Angola and those from "other countries" which include English speaking countries such as Liberia and Uganda amongst others, were the most likely to indicate that they are fluent in English. We also found that respondents who are in skilled or semi-skilled occupations or those who are students are the most likely to be fluent in English.

Level of education

More than 50% of the respondents interviewed had completed Matric or a higher level of education, which reaffirms that a large proportion of asylum seekers and refugees who come to South Africa possess high levels of education. In particular, one quarter of the sample had completed tertiary education. There were no significant differences on education level between male and female respondents. However, we found that Burundian and Somali respondents tended to be the least educated, while respondents from DRC and Congo-Brazzaville were amongst the most educated.

Occupation & employment

The largest proportion of respondents in our sample (41%) indicated that they were students before they came to South Africa, while two fifths of the sample worked in semi-skilled or skilled occupations before arrival. Only 4% of the sample indicated that they were unemployed. In contrast, when we analysed their current occupation in South Africa, the number of respondents who indicated that they are unemployed increased eight-fold. Moreover, 43% of respondents are currently engaged in unskilled occupations such as selling goods on the street, or engaging in piece jobs

such as car watch or car wash. Only 5% of the sample indicated that they are employed in highly skilled occupations.

Household size

The average household size for our sample is 3.5 people. Over half of our sample (57%) indicated that they had dependents. On average, respondents had between three and four dependents. Approximately half of all dependents in our sample are not currently in South Africa but in the majority of cases (55%) respondents are supporting these dependents financially.

Income

Monthly household income ranged from nothing (5% of the sample) to more than R3500 (11% of the sample). The median value for monthly per capita income was R571. In the majority of cases (65%), the main source of income for the household was represented by the work performed by the respondent himself or herself. Besides their own income, we found that 63% of the sample does not receive any form of financial assistance.

EXPERIENCES UPON ARRIVAL IN SOUTH AFRICA

Arrival in South Africa

Over half of the respondents in our sample (59%) arrived on or after the year 2000. The majority of respondents (67%) came to South Africa by themselves. In contrast, we found that female respondents and Rwandan respondents (both male and female) were significantly more likely than all other respondents to state that they came with family or friends. Taking into account where respondents came from, they usually relied on the closest border post to come into South Africa.

Most asylum seekers in our sample had Section 22 asylum permits, while most refugees had Section 24 refugee permits. However, only three refugees in our sample had been issued with a maroon identity document.

Access to shelter & housing

Upon arrival, respondents generally stayed with people who they had some familiarity with. Half of the respondents in our sample stayed with refugee friends, while 16% stayed with relatives, and 10% stayed with people from their same country even though they did not know them. Only 4% of respondents stayed at a shelter when they first arrived. These findings generally point to the existence of social networks amongst asylum seekers and refugees. Respondents usually stayed longer in places where they had some connection to the residents.

Access to food

With regard to access to food, we found that 23% of respondents had received food assistance within the first three months of arrival in South Africa. Over half of these respondents (57%) stated that they received this assistance from churches or mosques, while a quarter of the respondents also indicated that they received assistance from JRS. In most cases this food assistance was provided once per month.

INTERACTION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS

Length of time to obtain refugee status

Two fifths of the sample applied between 1990 and April 2000, whereas the rest of the sample (58%) lodged their applications for refugee status on or after April 2000. It would seem that since the introduction of the Refugee Act of 1998 on April 1st 2000, asylum seekers have been waiting for shorter periods of time to have their status determined. For instance, only 15% of respondents were granted refugee status within six months of application, compared to 39% of those who applied on or after April 2000. We found that over a quarter (27%) of respondents who applied before April 2000 are still waiting for their status to be determined despite Home Affairs' attempts to clean up the backlog of cases. Over half of these respondents have waited for more than four years. There are also indications that a backlog is developing under the Refugee Act. Almost two thirds of respondents who applied under the Refugee Act of 1998 and who are still waiting for their status to be determined have been waiting for a period of up to two years.

Work and study prohibition

Taking into account that the Department of Home Affairs often takes longer than the stipulated six months in the Refugee Act to grant refugee status, it is of great concern that only one third of respondents - who applied under the Refugee Act and who had been waiting for longer than six months for Home Affairs to decide on their applications – knew that they had the right to petition for the work and study prohibition to be lifted.

Barriers linked to submission of application for refugee status, renewal of asylum permits and renewal of refugee permits.

Respondents were by far significantly more likely to experience barriers at the Braamfontein Refugee Reception Office than at the Pretoria one. About half of the sample experienced barriers in submitting their application for refugee status. The main barriers identified were being unable to access the Office, being required to pay a bribe and quotas per country or per day of who is allowed into the Office. The

majority of these barriers were experienced with officials from the Department; however, in the majority of cases, these barriers went unreported.

Less than one third (31%) of respondents experienced barriers in renewing their asylum permits. Bribery, non-functioning computers and lack of access figured prominently amongst the main barriers experienced. In the majority of these cases, barriers were not reported to anyone.

Over half of the respondents who had renewed their refugee permits indicated that they had not experienced any barriers. Almost one third (30%) of those who did experience barriers, pointed to being required to pay a bribe as the main barrier mostly by officials and interpreters. However, in most cases barriers were not reported.

Requests for payment during different stages of the asylum procedure

Over a quarter of respondents were asked to pay for submission of an application; 11% for renewal of asylum permits, while 21% indicated that they were asked to pay for translation services. At the different stages, it was often interpreters, and DHA officials to a lesser extent, who asked for these payments. More than half of the respondents (55%) are currently paying in excess of R100 simply to submit an application. On average, we found that interpreters received R367 per application that was submitted. Compared to submitting an application, respondents are being asked to pay lesser amounts for the renewal of asylum permits, namely up to R100; however, this practice happens more often, usually on a monthly or 3-month basis. For translation services, over two thirds of respondents who were asked to pay, paid in excess of R100.

Interaction with government authorities

Contrary to commonly held beliefs, the overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that they had never had their documents destroyed or removed by government authorities. Almost all respondents indicated that the lack of proper documentation has negative effects on their lives in South Africa. In particular, the lack of a proper identity document makes it difficult for respondents to access employment as well as basic social services such as education, housing, and health care.

CURRENT LIVING CONDITIONS

This section groups together a series of questions that we asked respondents about their current living conditions in South Africa.

Accessing employment

The lack of proper documentation, whether in the form of a lack of ID or not having permission to work, in addition to not being South African figured prominently as the main barriers that respondents have faced in securing employment. Since refugees have permission to work, it is not surprising that asylum seekers were the most likely to point to the lack of permission to work as a difficulty. Over a quarter of respondents (28%) who have some form of employment, but particularly those who are engaged in skilled occupations, indicated that they have an employer. However, 71% of them did not know where to go for assistance if problems with their employers arise.

Current place of stay

This section explores respondents' current places of residence, as well as their knowledge of where to go if problems with landlords arise. It shows that the majority of the respondents in our sample stay in places for which they pay rent. Almost two fifths of respondents rent a room in a house or flat, 31% rent a room in a house or flat which they share with other individuals, while 17% rent a whole house or flat. Usually, the larger the household, the greater the chance that household members would be staying in bigger places. Those who share a room in a flat or house generally pay R250 in rent per month, whereas those who rent a room in a house or flat are more likely to pay between R250 and R750 per month. On average, respondents stay in places that have 3 rooms, excluding kitchen and bathroom, which they share with 6 people.

Assistance with accommodation

We found that almost two fifths of respondents currently do not know where to go for assistance with accommodation. Those who knew were more likely to resort to entities that bypass the government -- such as friends, churches/mosques, UNHCR or relatives for assistance -- rather than the government itself. Similarly, we found that the large majority of respondents who rented a place did not know where to go for assistance if problems with landlords arise.

Access to food

With regards to access to food, this part of the report shows that on average, all respondents have access to some food. In particular, over two fifths of them have two meals a day. It is of concern, however, that 39% of our sample are only able to manage one meal per day. Households that have no income were the most likely to indicate that they have one meal per day, whereas households earning more than R2000 per month were significantly more likely to have three meals a day. Despite these findings, 78% of respondents indicated that there are days where there is no

food for them or their family unit to eat. This could indicate that income and subsequent access to food might be erratic rather than constant.

Only over one quarter of all respondents (28%), but more women than men in our sample, are currently receiving food assistance, mostly on a monthly basis. Almost half of the respondents who are receiving food assistance obtain it from churches or mosques, while a third also indicated that they are receiving food from SACC at Khotso House in Johannesburg.

Access to healthcare

Focusing on healthcare, the report shows that almost half of the respondents most often go to public hospitals for emergency care for which they pay, on average, R37. Worryingly, 13% of respondents who tried to access emergency medical care were refused emergency medical care mainly by hospital administrative personnel. Two important reasons cited for refusal were the hospital not accepting documents and being unable to pay for emergency health care. The largest proportion of respondents (41%) who were refused emergency care sought, as an alternative, to try another health facility.

As to reproductive health care or family planning, the majority of our sample (80%), but predominantly male respondents, indicated that they do not use these services. Those who do either go to public hospitals (11%) or public clinics (8%). For primary health care, two fifths of respondents go to public hospitals, while 28% rely on local public clinics. Unlike in the case with emergency care, 92% of the respondents indicated that they had never been refused care.

Respondents either do not pay for healthcare services (37%), rely on their own wages or income to pay (33%), or rely on refugee friends to help (17%).

Access to education

In this survey, we focused mainly on access to primary and secondary school education. Due to space constraints, we were unable to focus on pre-school or tertiary education.

In terms of primary school education, this section of the report shows that 17% of respondents in our sample had children or dependents with them of primary school going age. Of these respondents, 30% are not sending their children to school mostly because they don't have the money to afford the school fees. In addition, one third of respondents (32%) who have primary school going age children indicated that their children had been refused admission because parents can't afford to pay for school fees, because the school is full, or alternatively because schools do not accept asylum seeker and refugee permits.

With respect to secondary school education, the study shows that only 8% of the sample (47 respondents) had children or dependents of secondary school going age. About half of these respondents' children are not attending school; in most cases this is because parents cannot afford to pay for fees.

Assessing needs

This section highlights what respondents identified as being the main basic needs that they require assistance with. The three most mentioned priorities were: Documentation (53%), employment opportunities (50%), and housing and shelter (42%). Access to documentation is directly linked to the ability to find employment and have a source of income that ensures the survival of respondents and their family units.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Asylum seekers and refugees in our sample tend to have regular contact with people from their home country, with South Africans in their local communities, and with other foreigners. Against assumptions that refugee communities might be insular, we found that the majority of asylum seekers and refugees in our sample have regular contact with South Africans; 49% of respondents sometimes interact with them, while 25% interact with them often. In addition, the majority of respondents (61%) indicated that they sometimes interact with other foreigners, while 17% do so more regularly.

Despite this level of interaction, over half of the sample (56%) perceived South Africans in a negative light. Similarly, the majority of the respondents believe that South Africans see them in an extremely negative light. Not only do the asylum seekers and refugees in our sample think that South Africans see them as stealing wives and jobs (69%), but also that they confuse them with undocumented migrants (5%) and treat them like animals (3%).

While respondents seem to interact with individual South Africans on a regular basis, they do not participate actively in a number of community organisations. By far, churches or mosques represent the most popular organisation that respondents belong to.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions included below apply to asylum seekers and refugees living largely within Gauteng province, and particularly Johannesburg and Pretoria. It is expected that as the study is extended nationally, this will allow findings and conclusions drawn, to be generalised to understand the situation of asylum seekers and refugees in the country as a whole. Nonetheless, considering that Johannesburg and Pretoria

house a significant proportion of the refugee population in South Africa, it could be argued that these findings are instructive and indicative of the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees nationally.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Conclusions

The findings from the study show that African refugees coming into the country tend to be relatively young, many of them having been students prior to coming to South Africa, and single. Most of them are fluent in English, have completed Matric or a higher level of education, and a large proportion of them have the experience of having worked in skilled and semi-skilled occupations. In other words, refugees are coming into South Africa with a diversity of skills that could be put to good use in a number of sectors of the South African economy. However, despite the South African government's emphasis on favouring largely skilled people to settle in South Africa, a large proportion of refugees who are skilled and are currently in the country are not allowed to exercise their skills. Instead, the majority of asylum seekers and refugees who were holding skilled or semi-skilled occupations before coming to South Africa are now either working in unskilled occupations or otherwise unemployed. Per capita monthly income compares with that of poor Africans in South Africa, with the exception that asylum seekers and refugees tend to be better educated, skilled, but unable to support themselves or to access social grants to supplement their income.

Recommendations

- The South African government must recognise the valuable contribution that asylum seekers and refugees can make to the South African economy and refrain from assuming that refugees are unskilled people or "economic migrants" in search of better work opportunities. Our findings show that many of the refugees who are currently in South Africa seem to have had better work opportunities while they were in their own countries and not in South Africa. The government should recognise that South Africans could benefit from the skills that asylum seekers and refugees can impart.
- Refugee service providers whose focus is on skills provision and training, should rely on asylum seekers and refugees themselves to impart their skills and train others.

EXPERIENCES UPON ARRIVAL IN SOUTH AFRICA

Conclusions

Despite the fact that the majority of respondents in our sample indicated that they came to South Africa alone, our findings regarding shelter and housing upon arrival nonetheless give a strong indication of the existence of support networks for asylum seekers who are new arrivals into the country. This is exemplified by the fact that only 4% of respondents stayed at shelters upon arrival while the majority stayed with either refugee friends or relatives. While we have argued that the low proportion of asylum seekers staying at shelters might also be due to the fact that asylum seekers might find out very quickly that the government provides very limited assistance to new arrivals, the finding that almost 70% of respondents relied on refugee friends or relatives for assistance upon arrival also illustrates that this is not likely to be the result of haphazard word of mouth information, but rather of more established and well-known coping strategies.

These networks might also help to explain how respondents gained access to food upon arrival. In our survey we found that less than one quarter of respondents received food assistance within their first three months in the country. This might indicate that either asylum seekers are bringing with them enough resources to sustain themselves during the first few months or possibly that these networks are supporting them.

For those respondents who relied on food assistance upon arrival, our findings show that churches and mosques, together with JRS, play an important role in providing assistance.

Recommendations

- These findings highlight the importance of conducting more in-depth research into the existence of networks, how they were formed, how far they extend and the extent of the support that they are able to provide to newcomers. This would also allow UNHCR and service providers to assess whether it is more fruitful to give support to these networks or to continue to establish separate shelters to house asylum seekers and refugees upon arrival and give out individual food parcels.

- Obtaining more information about these networks could also influence possible support from local Departments of Welfare and Social Services. It is the practice of these departments to provide assistance in the form of transfer payments to NGOs or other organisations that act as implementing partners in delivering a range of social services that fall under these departments. If the networks are strong enough, these could be institutionalised in such a way as to facilitate access to this type of government assistance.

INTERACTION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS

Conclusions

Our findings highlight a number of issues that need to be addressed in relation to the Department of Home Affairs' processing of refugee applications. As previously indicated, despite the Department's attempts to clear the backlog of applications that fell under the Aliens Control Act, over a quarter of respondents who applied prior to April 2000 are still awaiting decisions on their applications. There is also evidence that a backlog of applications is forming for asylum seekers who applied under the Refugee Act of 1998. Three quarters of respondents who applied under this Act and who indicated that they were still awaiting a decision have been waiting for a period that extends from 7 months to 3 years, with the majority of them waiting for a period of between one and two years.

This finding is even more alarming considering that the majority of asylum seekers who applied under the Refugee Act of 1998 and who have been waiting for more than 6 months for their status to be determined had no knowledge that they could petition for the work and study prohibition to be lifted if six months had expired without the Department making a decision on their applications. At the same time, it is necessary to question whether *only* asylum seekers' knowledge of this regulation would have an impact in forcing Home Affairs to honour this regulation considering that over half of the respondents in our sample who knew about this right and who applied for the prohibition to be lifted did not succeed.

In addition to this problem, we found that there are a number of barriers that asylum seekers and refugees are experiencing at different stages of the refugee determination process, namely submission of applications for refugee status, renewal of asylum permits, and renewal of refugee permits. These barriers tend to be experienced mostly at the Braamfontein Refugee Reception Office. The most concerning of these barriers are respondents being required to pay or bribe someone for the different services, or not being allowed into the Refugee Reception Office. At each of the three stages examined, approximately a quarter of respondents indicated that one of the main barriers was being asked to pay someone, while up to one quarter complained about being unable to access the Office.

There is ample evidence that significant amounts of money are exchanging hands between asylum seekers and refugees on one hand, and interpreters and Home Affairs officials on the other. The most worrying aspect is that this illegal practice is mostly going unreported as very few asylum seekers and refugees are lodging complaints with the police or with entities such as the SA Human Rights Commission. Without this concrete evidence, it is very difficult to challenge the Department to act on this problem.

Lack of access to the Refugee Reception Office tends to be a problem mainly focused on the Braamfontein Office. Security guards working for the Department of Home

Affairs lock the doors to the Office after a certain number of asylum seekers and refugees come in each day, thus leaving a number of people without being able to access the Office. This in turn has serious consequences for asylum seekers and refugees left outside who have no documentary proof that they have attempted to apply for asylum or renew their asylum permits at the Office. This has led a number of NGOs to issue letters to asylum seekers and refugees stating that the person was at the Refugee Reception Office but was not allowed in, just in case that they are harassed by government authorities for not having any, or expired, documents. Asylum seekers and refugees who hold no documents or expired documents face being arrested or taken to detention centres, with little regard by the police to listen to their attempts to access the Office.

Focusing more broadly on the issuing of documents, despite claims to the contrary by the Department, the lack of proper ID documents issued to asylum seekers who are granted the right to work which need to be renewed on a short-term basis do not facilitate asylum seekers' ability to obtain employment to support themselves, as employers are sceptical of hiring individuals that have a legal status only for one or three months. These documents also do not facilitate asylum seeker or refugee access to basic services such as healthcare, education, and opening bank accounts. In this vein, very few refugees in our sample indicated that they had been issued with maroon identity documents. Regardless of the form that documents take at present, entities such as employers, banks, as well as hospital and school administrative staff often do not recognise these documents because they do not consider them to be official forms of documentation; instead they regard them as "fake" or easily forgeable pieces of identification. Not only does this limit the right of asylum seekers and refugees to access basic services that they are entitled to under the South African Constitution, but also deny asylum seekers and refugees the ability to contribute their skills to the South African economy, as it is very difficult for them to secure employment.

Recommendations

- UNHCR, jointly with legal NGOs such as Lawyers for Human Rights, Wits Law Clinic, as well as the NCRA, should undertake awareness campaigns with asylum seekers to inform them of their right to petition the Standing Committee to lift the prohibition on work and study if six months have expired and the Department of Home Affairs has not made a decision on their refugee applications. At the same time, these entities must engage in discussions with the Department to find out why petitions lodged by asylum seekers for the lifting of the prohibition are not being honoured. If negotiations prove fruitless, it might be necessary to consider legal action to challenge Home Affairs directly to implement this right.

- The NCRA and the Roll Back Xenophobia Campaign should undertake awareness campaigns with asylum seekers and refugees, as well as refugee

organisations to encourage asylum seekers and refugees to lodge complaints against incidents of bribery and corruption or to seek assistance from legal NGOs, such as Lawyers for Human Rights and Wits Law Clinic, on how to engage in this process. Asylum seekers and refugees are likely to feel quite vulnerable or afraid that their names will be known to the Department in this process and therefore are likely to require support from legal NGOs to engage in this process.

- UNHCR and NCRA should hold discussions with entities such as the Black Sash and the Public Services Commission which have attempted to institute systems at the Pretoria Refugee Reception Office to curb practices of bribery and corruption. It would seem that the systems instituted at the Refugee Reception Office in Pretoria have helped to lessen bribery incidents to some extent.

- Concurrently, UNHCR should consider funding a number of interpreters at each of the Refugee Reception Offices who can provide translation services to asylum seekers and refugees during the different stages of the refugee determination process. UNHCR would need to make the names of these individuals known to asylum seekers and refugees, as well as indicate that they can be approached for assistance without their needing to be paid. In the case that these interpreters ask for payments or are seen to be receiving payments, asylum seekers and refugees should be instructed to report these individuals directly to the UNHCR.

- If a limit to the number of asylum seekers and refugees who are allowed into the Refugee Reception Office in Braamfontein must be implemented, the Department of Home Affairs, rather than NGOs working with asylum seekers and refugees, must issue letters to asylum seekers and refugees who make attempts to access the Office that could act as proof to different government authorities and service providers that they have attempted to access the Refugee Reception Office.

- With regard to the issuing of documentation, the Department of Home Affairs should consider issuing asylum permits for a period of six months. If the six months expire without the Department having made a decision on applications, asylum seekers should be issued with permits that are valid for a further period of six months that grant them the right to work and study. Extending the validity of the asylum permits would lead to a reduction in the workload of the understaffed Refugee Reception Offices.

- In addition to extending the validity of the asylum permits, the Department should formalise these forms of identification, by laminating them and putting anti-forgery marks or marks that can only be seen with UV light, so that they can be more easily accepted by different entities. The permits' current form as

multiply-folded pieces of paper with a number of stamps on them do not facilitate asylum seekers' and refugees' access to a number of basic social and financial services as these documents are often perceived to be fake.

- Upon determination of refugee status, the Department of Home Affairs must immediately issue all recognised refugees with formal maroon identity documents.

- Upon formalisation of the different forms of documentation (for asylum seekers and refugees), the Department, in conjunction with UNHCR and entities such as the Roll Back Xenophobia campaign, Lawyers for Human Rights, NCRA and Wits Law Clinic must engage in a massive awareness campaign with government officials within key departments such as Health, Education, Labour and Social Development to make officials and administrative personnel working under these departments aware of what the different forms of identification issued to asylum seekers and refugees look like.

CURRENT LIVING CONDITIONS

Conclusions

Considering the problems with the issuing of documents raised previously, it was not surprising to find that respondents in our sample identified the lack of proper documentation, whether in the form of a lack of a formal ID document or not having permission to work as both their main difficulty in accessing employment as well as their most pressing need that they require assistance with. Linked to employment, the study found that the large majority of respondents who had an employer did not know where to resort for assistance if problems with their employers arise. While it is likely that this lack of knowledge is comparable to that of ordinary South Africans, it is of concern that asylum seekers and refugees in particular lack this knowledge, as they can often be more vulnerable to exploitation due to their temporary status and their being foreigners.

Similarly, it is of concern that a large proportion of respondents in our sample who stay in places where they pay rent currently do not know where to go if problems with landlords arise. Once again, while it is likely that a large proportion of ordinary South Africans also lack this knowledge, it is important to keep in mind that asylum seekers and refugees are in a particularly vulnerable position, due to their lacking bank accounts, the possible existence of language barriers, their lack of permanent employment, and their problems with documentation which could facilitate landlords' taking advantage of their situation.

Asylum seekers' and refugees' lack of knowledge about their rights also became evident in our findings on access to healthcare and education. As it was stated

previously, 13% of respondents who tried to access emergency health care indicated that they were refused assistance mostly by administrative personnel at public hospitals. While some of these respondents did not know why they were refused care, other reasons included non-acceptance of documents, inability to pay the required fee or lack of any type of documentation. Despite respondents' awareness of why they were turned away, none of the respondents who were refused assistance reported the incident to the facility management. Instead, many respondents sought to try another facility or seek assistance from their refugee communities. This could indicate that either asylum seekers and refugees are not aware of their constitutionally-protected rights to access emergency care; or otherwise, if they are aware, that they might be too afraid to confront administrative personnel.

Similarly, we found that 30% of respondents who had children of primary school going age are not sending their children to primary school mostly because they are unable to pay for the school fees. In addition, one third of respondents with children of primary school going age indicated that their children had been refused admission to the local school, mainly due to respondents' inability to pay for fees, the school being full or the failure of the school to accept their documents. None of the respondents reported these problems to the school management but chose instead to either try another school or do nothing about the refusal. As in the case with refusal of emergency health care, it would seem that respondents are unaware of the rights of their children to study and not to be turned away due to their inability to pay fees, the school being full or failure to accept documents. Had respondents had this knowledge of their children's rights, they might have been tempted to report the incident to the school management or seek assistance from NGOs. At the same time, respondents might not have felt confident enough to fight for their rights and therefore chose to try other schools.

Recommendations

- Taking into account that documentation has been identified by respondents as a key element not only to access employment and ensure survival, but also to access basic social and financial services, the UNHCR should strengthen its focus on working closely with the Department of Home Affairs on the formalisation of identity documents to asylum seekers and refugees, as well as on their being issued in a timely fashion.

- Legal service providers as well as the NCRA should compile a pamphlet for asylum seekers and refugees that includes the main laws that protect employees in the workplace, avenues and procedures for settling disputes, as well as entities that can be contacted if problems with employers arise.

- Similarly, legal service providers and the NCRA should compile a pamphlet for asylum seekers and refugees that includes people's rights and obligations

as tenants, as well as existing avenues for dealing with landlord problems, such as the Housing Tribunal.

- The findings emanating from this report surrounding access to services such as healthcare and education show that urgent awareness campaigns have to be undertaken with both asylum seekers and refugees on one hand, and with the National Departments of Health and Education on the other. Each asylum seeker and refugee should be aware of their constitutionally-protected right to have access to emergency care regardless of whether they can pay or not or whether they have particular kinds of documents. In addition, each asylum seeker and refugee should be conscientised of the right of their children to go to primary school, of the fact that a primary school cannot turn away a child because his/her parents/guardians cannot afford to pay for school fees, because the school is full or because the school does not recognise their documents. At the same time, however, access to these basic rights should not have to be fought by asylum seekers, refugees or service providers on a case-by-case (hospital or school) basis. For this reason, while it is important to empower asylum seekers and refugees about their basic rights and where they can go to report infringements on these rights, the UNHCR should devote increasing attention in working more closely with the National Departments of Health and Education to ensure that access to healthcare and education for asylum seekers, refugees and their children becomes accepted as a national policy that is communicated and implemented at the most basic levels, namely hospitals and schools respectively.

- The UNHCR, jointly with its implementing partners and the South African Human Rights Commission must produce information sheets and conduct awareness and education campaigns with asylum seekers and refugees, as well as their representative organisations to inform them of their rights to have access to public health and education services, of their responsibility to inform the South African Human Rights Commission of any infringements of their rights, and of any other institutions that they should approach to lodge such complaints. This information should preferably be conveyed soon after asylum seekers arrive in the country and should be communicated by all implementing service providers, regardless of whether they focus directly on access to services such as education and healthcare. In this regard, UNHCR should make use of the survival guide compiled by Lawyers for Human Rights to convey this information.

- Simultaneously, the UNHCR should work closely with the Roll Back Xenophobia Campaign, the National Consortium on Refugee Affairs and the South African Human Rights Commission to conduct awareness and education campaigns with national, provincial and local government officials in the Departments of Health and Education on the distinction between asylum

seekers and refugees, as well as their respective rights to have access to health and education services.

- In this regard, the National Departments of Health and Education should issue a circular or communiqué to all officials, professionals and administrative personnel at hospital level and school level respectively, which seeks to make them aware of the different types of identification issued to asylum seekers and refugees, including the new maroon and silver identity documents for recognised refugees to ensure that asylum seekers and refugees are not turned away on the basis of improper documentation.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Conclusions

Our findings show that respondents in our sample are more likely to interact with different groups of people on an individual basis rather than by being members of community organisations. Against perceptions that refugee communities might be insular, asylum seekers and refugees in our sample have high degrees of contact with people from their own countries, while they have some to regular contact with South Africans and other foreigners. Despite this level of interaction, however, the majority of respondents had very negative perceptions of South Africans while they also felt that South Africans saw them in an extremely negative light. In this regard, the majority of respondents felt that South Africans think of them as people who come to steal their jobs and wives.

The responses obtained to the questions about perceptions of one another indicate that respondents were willing to generalise about all South Africans, despite respondents' levels of interaction with them and consequent ability to differentiate amongst South Africans. It is possible that these negative perceptions might also affect respondents' willingness to participate in a number of local community organisations. Compared to South Africans, asylum seekers and refugees were less likely to be actively involved in a number of community organisations, except for participation in churches and mosques, where asylum seekers and refugees in our sample were more likely to be more actively involved than South Africans nationally. It is possible that asylum seekers and refugees resort to churches, mosques or other religious organisations for spiritual and personal solace, as well as the support of people from their own countries to overcome difficult times. Participation in other types of community organisations is likely to require asylum seekers and refugees to have a certain degree of acceptance within their communities. Considering the negative perceptions that asylum seekers and refugees have about South Africans and about how they think South Africans perceive them, it is likely that asylum seekers and refugees might feel victimised if they participate in these organisations. Alternatively, asylum seekers and refugees might be trying to deal with their own

problems of documentation, access to services and employment and devote less attention to community concerns.

Recommendations

- The UNHCR, jointly with the Roll Back Xenophobia Campaign, should undertake awareness campaigns that allow South Africans, and asylum seekers and refugees to exchange views and experiences about one another since stereotypes are being reproduced about each other from both sides. These campaigns should take the form of community meetings, road shows, and discussions at schools, as well as at government level. It is extremely important for government officials to publicly debunk some of the myths about asylum seekers and refugees and speak positively about the contribution that asylum seekers and refugees can make to the country.

- Respondents' high level of participation in religious organisations within their communities should be taken into account in undertaking awareness campaigns. Working closely with religious organisations might allow entities such as the Roll Back Xenophobia Campaign as well as other service providers to reach a large number of asylum seekers and refugees within a setting that they feel safe and comfortable with.

- While issues of integration and community involvement were not analysed in detail in this report, the findings point to the need to conduct more in-depth research to be able to understand why respondents do not generally participate in community organisations, as well as how the negative perceptions are created and sustained despite the level of contact that exists between asylum seekers and refugees and local South Africans.

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INTRODUCTION

The number of refugees and asylum seekers entering South Africa, particularly from other parts of Africa, has risen steadily since the advent of democracy in 1994 and the proliferation of conflict in other parts of the continent. We know very little about these communities, their experiences in South Africa, as well as their priority needs and concerns. To date, neither the South African government, NGOs nor the UNHCR has undertaken any study to begin to address these issues.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The lack of reliable, empirical baseline data on asylum seekers and refugees has been acknowledged as a fundamental problem by many organisations working in this field. This includes the National Consortium for Refugee Affairs (NCRA), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), the Roll Back Xenophobia Campaign (RBXC), Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR) and Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS). As one is unable to identify or quantify priority needs and concerns, the ability of these and other actors to strategise in a context of limited resources and capacity is further undermined.

Service providers such as LHR, JRS, Cape Town Refugee Centre, and Catholic Welfare and Development provide some services to asylum seekers and refugees on a case-by-case basis and do not have a comprehensive view of their day-to-day experiences at the hands of state officials or indeed, non-governmental organisations. Understanding their coping and survival mechanisms and strategies in the broader context of limited resources is critical for purposes of tailoring interventions to ensure maximum impact. It is also important to understand how needs and priorities, along with coping/survival mechanisms and strategies evolve at different stages of the refugee experience, from the time of arriving in the country, to a time when they become established and self-sustaining.

UNHCR recognised that the acquisition of empirical baseline data on asylum seekers and refugees would be of benefit to a range of socio-economic and administrative interventions by state and non-state actors in the field. These include, but are not limited to: Government departments and UNHCR, asylum seekers and refugees themselves, as well as NGOs, CBOs, service providers and other institutions working in the field.

In order to begin the process of acquiring reliable empirical baseline data, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) commissioned the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (C A S E) in December 2001 to undertake a needs assessment of asylum seekers and refugees in South Africa. This study focuses on

asylum seekers and refugees from Africa, as they constitute the majority of the refugee population. As originally proposed, the study was meant to collect data from the five cities where Refugee Reception Offices are located, namely Pretoria, Johannesburg, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Durban. However, due to limited funding, the current study focuses on Pretoria and Johannesburg only. It is hoped that as more funding is secured, the study will be extended to the remaining sites.

This study has the following main objectives:

5. To provide reliable empirical data on asylum seekers and refugees to national government departments to pursue the development of integrated and coherent policy on service provision to asylum seekers and refugees;
6. To provide reliable empirical data (i.e. demographics, social and economic indicators, information on coping/survival mechanisms & strategies) of asylum seekers and refugees to NGOs, service providers and other organisations working in the field, such as UNHCR, NCRA, RBXC and SAHRC, amongst others to help them identify priority needs and concerns, thereby helping to inform their activities and monitor existing government practices;
7. To assess more accurately where education and awareness-raising intervention is required; and
8. To increase the knowledge of human rights and responsibilities of asylum seekers and refugees, and improve knowledge of and access to remedial mechanisms and facilitation services.

In order to address the above objectives, this project seeks to provide comprehensive empirical data on:

- Demographics of asylum seekers and refugees, particularly, age, gender, level of education, and income;
- Their needs and priority concerns, particularly with regard to specific socio-economic and legal issues;
- Their coping / survival mechanisms and strategies;
- Their knowledge of their own rights and remedial mechanisms to address violations of these rights;
- Obstacles to accessing rights;
- Their experience with the asylum determination process, their treatment and the enforcement of Home Affairs regulations; and
- Their skills and training.

BREAKDOWN OF THE SAMPLE

The focus of the study was on African asylum seekers and refugees only. In order to design the sampling frame for the study, we relied on refugee and asylum seeker statistics obtained from UNHCR but compiled by the National Department of Home Affairs. While the study was conducted in Johannesburg and Pretoria only, it was not possible to obtain Refugee Reception Office specific statistics or provincial statistics. For this reason, C A S E relied on national statistics provided by UNHCR and proceeded to make the sample representative of the refugee population nationwide.

The statistics used correspond to statistics for the first quarter of 2002 compiled by Department of Home Affairs. Two sets of statistics were combined, namely those for recognised refugees and asylum applicants. Refugee statistics included the recognised applications as of 1 January 2002 plus new arrivals since 1 January 2002. Asylum application statistics included pending applications as of 1 January 2002 plus individuals who had applied since 1 January 2002.

Since the above statistics did not include a sex breakdown, the sex breakdown of respondents per country was calculated from an estimated total in all categories of refugee applications received nationwide per country from January 1994 to 31 December 2001 obtained from UNHCR.

As previously indicated, one of the main aims of the study was to collect reliable baseline statistical data that could be used to inform the activities of UNHCR, government as well as organisations that are directly involved in providing services to asylum seekers and refugees. To achieve this goal, C A S E used a survey instrument to collect information from 600 asylum seekers and refugees. Half of these respondents, namely 300, were interviewed in Johannesburg and the other half in Pretoria. Countries were selected proportionally, in order to mirror the refugee and asylum seeker population nationally.

During the process of identifying countries to be included in the study, a thorough selection was done jointly with UNHCR. Three criteria were used in the identification of countries to be included in the study. These were:

1. Major refugee-producing countries in Africa. Based on this criterion, refugees from African countries such as Zambia, Egypt, Swaziland and Zimbabwe were excluded due to their small numbers[1]. In addition, countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, Eritrea, Senegal and Ghana were not, based on UNHCR's definition, considered to be refugee-producing countries and therefore excluded from the sample.

[1] Less than 100 people from each of these countries sought asylum in South Africa in 2001-2002. These numbers are too small to be able to conduct any meaningful statistical analysis.

2. Smaller refugee-producing countries where the likelihood of receiving more refugees from in future are high due to conflicts and wars in the countries. The study was seen as an opportunity to get increased information about the coping mechanisms of the persons from these countries prior to their possible arrival in RSA. This is the rationale for including respondents from Sierra Leone, despite their small numbers.
3. Countries from where a large number of refugees are provided UNHCR assistance in RSA (e.g. Liberia, Sudan).

Based on the above criteria, the following interviews were conducted in Johannesburg and Pretoria, respectively.

Johannesburg						
Expected interviews				**Actual interviews conducted**		
	Male	Female	**Total**	Male	Female	**Total**
DRC	54	19	**73**	54	19	**73**
Angola	58	7	**65**	50	12	**62**
Somalia	58	7	**65**	56	9	**65**
Burundi	22	3	**25**	21	3	**24**
Congo -Braz	16	4	**20**	16	4	**20**
Rwanda	15	3	**18**	14	4	**18**
Ethiopia	15	3	**18**	15	3	**18**
Uganda	5	1	**6**	5	1	**6**
Cameroon	5	1	**6**	5	1	**6**
Liberia	3	0	**3**	3	0	**3**
Sudan	3	0	**3**	0	0	**0**
Sierra Leone	2	1	**3**	2	1	**3**
Total	253	52	**305**	241	57	**298**

Table 1: Expected vs. actual interviews conducted in Johannesburg, by sex and country of origin

Pretoria						
	Expected interviews			**Actual interviews conducted**		
	Male	Female	**Total**	Male	Female	**Total**
DRC	53	19	**72**	**53**	**19**	**72**
Angola	58	7	**65**	**55**	**7**	**62**
Somalia	59	6	**65**	**58**	**7**	**65**
Burundi	23	2	**25**	**23**	**2**	**25**
Congo -Braz	16	4	**20**	**16**	**4**	**20**
Rwanda	14	3	**17**	**14**	**3**	**17**
Ethiopia	14	3	**17**	**13**	**4**	**17**
Uganda	4	1	**5**	**4**	**1**	**5**
Cameroon	0	0	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Liberia	3	0	**3**	**3**	**0**	**3**
Sudan	3	0	**3**	**3**	**0**	**3**
Sierra Leone	3	0	**3**	**2**	**1**	**3**
Total	250	45	**295**	**244**	**48**	**292**

Table 2: Expected vs. actual interviews conducted in Pretoria, by sex and country of origin

For the most part, interviews were completed as outlined. The only exceptions were some interviews with Angolans in both Pretoria and Johannesburg. In Pretoria, the interviews were not completed due to the small size of the Angolan population in that city. The interviews outstanding in Johannesburg are due to the disappearance of one of the South African fieldworkers. Despite numerous attempts to contact the individual, the questionnaires were never returned.

Due to their small numbers, the answers provided by respondents from the following countries will be grouped together for analytical purposes throughout the study. These countries are: Cameroon, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Uganda.

METHODOLOGY

DEVELOPMENT OF THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Guided by the terms of reference agreed to by UNHCR, and in order to ensure that the questions included in the survey would be relevant and useful to organisations working with asylum seekers and refugees, C A S E convened a reference group made up of representatives of UNHCR, its implementing partners, refugees, as well as other service providers, to provide input into the different sections of the questionnaire. Based on the deliberations and suggestions of the reference group, C A S E compiled a draft questionnaire that was circulated for comment to all reference group participants. After a series of drafts, the questionnaire was finalised and piloted with refugees to ensure the clarity and wording of questions.

During the process of developing the survey questionnaire, C A S E began the process of selecting interviewers for the study.

SELECTION OF INTERVIEWERS

One of the aims of this study was to ensure that some capacity building and resources were directed to the refugee communities on which we focused our study. For this reason, most of the interviewers for this study were refugees themselves, while a minority were South African. Besides empowering refugees, the reliance on refugees facilitated access to refugee communities as well as allowed interviewers to overcome language and cultural barriers. The three South African interviewers included amongst the group of interviewers for each city acted as a control group to be able to measure possible bias brought about by refugees interviewing other asylum seekers or refugees from their own country.

SELECTION OF REFUGEE INTERVIEWERS

In order to select interviewers, C A S E contacted established refugee forums and organisations, in both Johannesburg and Pretoria and formally requested them to nominate refugees, from the communities represented in these forums, who would be able to act as interviewers. In Johannesburg, C A S E contacted the Johannesburg Refugee Network, Horn of Africa Society and the Coordinating Body for Refugee Communities (CBRC), while in Pretoria C A S E worked through the Pretoria Refugee Forum.

After having selected the specific African countries to focus on in the study, C A S E requested the forums and organisations to provide refugees from those countries of focus. As it has been alluded to previously, C A S E, jointly with UNHCR, decided that it would be beneficial to pair interviewers with country of origin in order to facilitate access. The number of interviewers requested per country of origin varied based on the different proportion of refugees to be interviewed from each country of origin. Both forums and organisations were requested to provide C A S E with CVs of potential interviewers. Upon receipt of these CVs, face-to-face interviews were conducted with the potential interviewers in Johannesburg, while telephonic interviews were used to select interviewers in Pretoria. Since the questionnaire was drafted in English with the understanding that interviewers would translate it into local languages, the interviews mainly allowed C A S E to assess potential interviewers' ability to understand and communicate in English.

SELECTION OF SOUTH AFRICAN INTERVIEWERS

In order to select South African interviewers to participate in the study who had some affinity to the content of the study, C A S E sent out an email request on the South Africa Immigration List (SAIMMIG) administered by the University of the Witwatersrand for people who might have experience in the field of asylum seekers and refugees and who might be willing to participate in the study as interviewers. A number of potential interviewers responded to the request, by submitting their CVs, and four of them were selected, three for Johannesburg and one for Pretoria. The outstanding two South African interviewers were selected from C A S E's own database of experienced interviewers.

TRAINING OF INTERVIEWERS

Once the selection of interviewers was finalised, a 2-day training session was conducted with interviewers in each of the two cities. The training was first conducted in Johannesburg, followed by the training in Pretoria one week later.

During the first day of the training sessions, the C A S E project manager explained the aims of the study, the selection of respondents, and began to work through the questionnaire, question by question, with the interviewers. The C A S E project manager also ensured that respondents had a clear understanding of the English terms used in the questionnaire in order to ensure that they would be accurately translated into different languages. During the first half of the second day of training, interviewers finished going through the questions in the questionnaire and engaged in role play with one another to acquaint themselves with the questionnaire prior to going to field. The filled questionnaires from the practice session were checked with each interviewer present in order to point out any mistakes and clarify any misunderstandings. During both days of training, interviewers were encouraged to ask any question that they might have about administering the survey.

SELECTION OF RESPONDENTS

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF RESPONDENTS

C A S E jointly with UNHCR agreed that respondents to be interviewed would be applicants themselves, and not accompanying members. In addition, to ensure that we would cover the experiences of respondents upon arrival to South Africa, C A S E jointly with UNHCR agreed that respondents to be interviewed would be those who who had been in the country for at least a period of three months and who had either submitted their applications or who had made active attempts at applying but were not allowed into the Reception Offices, particularly in the case of Johannesburg respondents[2].

To ensure that respondents had been in the country for at least a period of three months and had submitted an application for refugee status, or at least actively attempted to do so, a screening questionnaire was administered with each respondent prior to administering the full survey.

Conducting research on a specific community such as asylum seekers and refugees is not conducive to relying on entirely random sampling methods. This would be both time consuming, as it would be difficult to find asylum seekers and refugees by doing a random selection of areas in Johannesburg and Pretoria, and also extremely costly. To address these shortcomings and to retain a degree of randomness in the selection process, C A S E relied on two different methods, namely community-based interviews and interviews at the Refugee Reception Offices in Johannesburg and Pretoria to interview respondents. In each city, on average half of the interviews were conducted at community level and half at the Refugee Reception Offices.

COMMUNITY-BASED INTERVIEWS

Instead of relying on a "snowball" sampling method where interviewers would be asked to go out into their communities and interview asylum seekers and refugees from their country of origin that they came across, C A S E opted for a different method that allowed it to reduce bias as well as exercise some control over the selection of respondents. Once interviewers were selected, C A S E asked each of the organisations which interviewers represented to provide lists of asylum seekers and refugees in their organisations and communities. Since interviewers were paired up with their country of origin, each interviewer was only asked to provide names of potential respondents from their own countries of origin. Separate lists were compiled for Johannesburg and Pretoria.

[2] Unlike the Refugee Reception Office in Pretoria, the Refugee Reception Office in Braamfontein keeps its doors locked and only allows a certain number of asylum seekers and refugees to access the Office on a daily basis. Those who exceed the number allowed in are forced to queue again outside of the Office the following day(s) to gain access.

C A S E asked interviewers to provide names for approximately three times the number of respondents that would need to be interviewed in order to allow for a random selection of respondents from the lists. Prior to proceeding with the selection, the lists were checked to ensure that there was no duplication of names. Where more than one interviewer was selected for a particular country, such as in the case of Angola, DRC and Somalia amongst others, care was taken to ensure that the names given to one interviewer did not come from the same list that s/he submitted. This served to provide an added control against possible selection bias. In order to select respondents from the lists, C A S E relied on a systematic random sampling method. This method relies on calculating an interval based on the total number of names available per country and the total number needed to be interviewed.

Based on the lists provided, C A S E undertook the selection of names of respondents to be interviewed per country and provided these specific names and contact details to each of the interviewers in the two cities. In order to facilitate access of South African interviewers to their respondents, attempts were made, where possible, to provide these interviewers with respondents that might be more likely to speak English. In cases where a language barrier existed, respondents were substituted by C A S E until the interviews were successfully completed.

SUBSTITUTIONS

While the research was being undertaken, there were instances where respondents had to be substituted. In the case that a respondent was not found or was unwilling to participate in the study, C A S E randomly selected another respondent from the existing lists and provided the new name to the interviewer. At no time were interviewers allowed to select their own respondents. In situations where insufficient names were provided on the lists and where a systematic random selection was not possible, interviewers were instructed to replace their community-based respondents with respondents who were randomly selected at the Refugee Reception Offices.

INTERVIEWS AT THE REFUGEE RECEPTION OFFICES

Approximately half of the respondents in each city were randomly selected from the asylum seekers and refugees who visited the Refugee Reception Offices in both Johannesburg and Pretoria during a period of three weeks.

C A S E interviewers were granted permission by each of the Offices to conduct interviews for a period of three weeks. UNHCR sent a letter directly to the Acting Director General of the Department of Home Affairs to inform him of the aims of the study and to seek permission to access the Reception Offices. In addition, the C A S E project manager faxed this letter, jointly with a letter from C A S E outlining the time span of the interviews, to the heads of the Refugee Reception Offices in both Johannesburg and Pretoria. Moreover, she communicated telephonically with both heads of the Reception Offices and accompanied all interviewers on their first day of interviews at the Reception Offices. Since arrangements were made for all

interviewers to be present on this first day, the C A S E project manager introduced the interviewers to the Heads of the Reception Offices, as well as the security guards.

C A S E interviewers were given C A S E t-shirts and caps to wear while conducting the interviews at the Refugee Reception Centres in order to facilitate their work. In addition, each interviewer was given a letter from C A S E indicating that the interviewer was working on behalf of C A S E, as well as copies of the letters from UNHCR and from C A S E as proof that permission had been obtained just in case that any problem arose during the course of the interviews.

After the first joint visit with the C A S E project manager, interviewers made their own way to the Refugee Reception Offices to complete their interviews as stipulated in the C A S E instructions given to each interviewer.

CHECK-BACKS AND SUPERVISION

Each city was assigned its own supervisor. The C A S E project manager acted as the supervisor for the interviews conducted in Johannesburg. A different supervisor, selected from C A S E's database of experienced supervisors, was selected to monitor progress in Pretoria. During the first two days of visits to the Refugee Reception Offices, supervisors were present to clarify any concerns as the interviews took place and to check completed questionnaires as soon as the interviewers finished administering them in order to ensure that questionnaires were being filled in according to the specified instructions. In the case that mistakes were found, interviewers were told of the mistakes and asked to rectify them on the spot. Instant checking of the questionnaires during the beginning of the interviewing phase ensured that mistakes were caught immediately instead of allowing them to be duplicated in subsequent questionnaires.

During the interviewing phase, interviewers were asked to submit questionnaires on an ongoing basis to their supervisors. Upon receipt of the questionnaires, supervisors checked each one of them. Where mistakes were found which required contacting the respondent again, interviewers were asked to either go back to the community where the person was interviewed or to contact the respondent telephonically (particularly in the case of interviews at the Reception Offices) to rectify the problem.

Payments to interviewers were only done after all questionnaires had been both submitted and checked for mistakes. During the course of the interviews, interviewers were only given transport money to allow them to reach the different interview places.

Once the fieldwork phase of the project was finished, each interviewer was given a certificate from C A S E indicating that they had successfully completed both the training and the administering of questionnaires for the project.

INFORMATION SHEETS

In order to assist asylum seekers and refugees with knowledge about their rights and referral information for different services, C A S E reproduced an information sheet compiled by Lawyers for Human Rights. The information sheet contained information about who is a refugee, steps in the refugee determination procedure, contact information for service providers in Johannesburg and Pretoria, as well as phone numbers of entities that could be contacted by asylum seekers and refugees, if their rights are violated. After conducting each of their interviews, interviewers handed a copy of this information sheet to each respondent. In addition, the C A S E project manager obtained permission from the Johannesburg Refugee Reception Office to post these information sheets, in poster size, at the Reception Office itself.

COMMENTS ON METHODOLOGY

The methodological steps outlined above were followed without any major disruptions. It should be noted, however, that the selection of respondents took longer than originally planned as it took some time for selected interviewers to draw up the lists of asylum seekers and refugees as requested.

The fieldwork phase was well-managed and no serious disruptions were experienced. The letters written and the direct communication with the Heads of the offices facilitated access to the Refugee Reception Offices. However, despite conditions being more welcoming at the Refugee Reception Office in Pretoria – in the sense that no doors are locked to prevent people from entering – interviewers found it more difficult to conduct their interviews at the Office in Pretoria due to the lack of access to spare rooms or offices where interviewers could sit down with respondents. In many cases, interviewers sat down with respondents outside the Office while the latter waited to be called for their permits.

Almost all questionnaires were completed as planned. However, as it has been already indicated, the main exception was the disappearance of one of the South African interviewers with his questionnaires. Attempts to contact the interviewer proved fruitless, as well as time-consuming. For this reason, the capturing and analysis of the data went ahead without these outstanding questionnaires.

Involving refugees directly in the data collection was a very positive experience. In both cities, interviewers attended the training as planned, participated actively and completed the interviews as instructed. This positive experience was facilitated by the fact that C A S E was very clear with all interviewers about the work that needed to be completed, entered into contracts defining the conditions of service with each interviewer, as well as clarified remuneration and conditions attached to it, during the training sessions prior to entering the fieldwork phase.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

This section provides a detailed demographic description of the respondents in this survey by the following variables: sex, refugee status, age, marital status, fluency in English, education, occupation, employment, household size and income.

A total of 298 questionnaires were completed in Johannesburg and 292 in Pretoria. This brought the total for the two cities to 590 questionnaires.

	N	%
Male	485	82
Female	105	18
Total	**590**	**100**

Table 3: Questionnaires completed by sex of respondent

Eight out of ten questionnaires were completed with male respondents. This breakdown is generally in line with the national breakdown of African asylum seekers and refugees in the country.

There was an even spread of asylum seekers and refugees in our sample. In addition, 9% of respondents indicated that they used to be refugees and now have been given asylum seeker documents again. Respondents from Congo-Brazzaville, DRC and Ethiopia were significantly more like to be asylum seekers than respondents from any other countries.

The average age of respondents in our sample was 30 years. Respondents from Rwanda, Somalia and DRC tended to be slightly older than respondents from all other countries in the sample, while Angolan respondents tended to be amongst the youngest. Female respondents were significantly more likely to be younger than male respondents.

Half of the respondents in our sample indicated that they are single. Male respondents were significantly more likely to be single, while female respondents tended to be separated, divorced or widowed. Considering that Angolan respondents were amongst the youngest in our sample, it is not surprising that they were the most likely to be single, while Rwandan and Somali respondents, who tended to be older, were the most likely to be married and living together with their partners.

Over two thirds of respondents indicated that they are fluent in English. In particular, respondents from Angola and those from "other countries" which include English speaking countries such as Liberia and Uganda amongst others, were the most likely to indicate that they are fluent in English. We also found that respondents who are in skilled or semi-skilled occupations or those who are students are the most likely to be fluent in English.

More than 50% of the respondents interviewed had completed Matric or a higher level of education, which reaffirms that a large proportion of asylum seekers and refugees who come to South Africa possess high levels of education. In particular, one quarter of the sample had completed tertiary education. There were no significant differences on education level between male and female respondents. However, we found that Burundian and Somali respondents tended to be the least educated, while respondents from DRC and Congo-Brazzaville were amongst the most educated.

The largest proportion of respondents in our sample (41%) indicated that they were students before they came to South Africa, while two fifths of the sample worked in semi-skilled or skilled occupations before arrival. Only 4% of the sample indicated that they were unemployed. In contrast, when we analysed their current occupation in South Africa, the number of respondents who indicated that they are unemployed increased eight-fold. Moreover, 43% of respondents are currently engaged in unskilled occupations such as selling goods on the street, or engaging in piece jobs such as car watch or car wash. Only 5% of the sample indicated that they are employed in highly skilled occupations.

The average household size for our sample is 3.5 people. Over half of our sample (57%) indicated that they had dependents. On average, respondents had between three and four dependents. Approximately half of all dependents in our sample are not currently in South Africa but in the majority of cases (55%) respondents are supporting these dependents financially.

Monthly household income ranged from nothing (5% of the sample) to more than R3500 (11% of the sample). The median value for monthly per capita income was R571. In the majority of cases (65%), the main source of income for the household was represented by the work performed by the respondent himself or herself. Besides their own income, we found that 63% of the sample does not receive any form of financial assistance.

REFUGEE STATUS

As the table below shows, there was an even spread of asylum seekers and refugees in our sample.

	N	%
Asylum seeker	268	45
Refugee	260	44
I was a refugee but now I am an asylum seeker again	54	9
Stateless	5	1
Tried to apply for refugee status but have not succeeded yet	3	1
Total	**590**	**100**

Table 4: What is your current status?

In addition, 9% of respondents indicated that they used to be refugees and now have been given asylum seeker documents again. There were no significant gender differences to report on this question.

The five respondents who indicated that they are "stateless" represent respondents from Burundi whose applications were rejected. They subsequently appealed. Their appeals were also rejected and have been instructed to leave the country. The three respondents who indicated that they have not succeeded yet in applying for refugee status are individuals who arrived recently and who have reported to Reception Offices but have not succeeded in having their applications taken in.

	Asylum seeker	**Refugee**	**Was refugee but now asylum seeker**	**Total**
Angola	32%	64%	4%	100% (N=122)
Burundi	48%	52%	0%	100% (N=44)
Congo-Brazza	63%	30%	8%	100% (N=40)
DRC	53%	45%	2%	100% (N=143)
Ethiopia	94%	6%	0%	100% (N=34)
Rwanda	23%	77%	0%	100% (N=35)
Somalia	35%	33%	32%	100% (N=130)
Other countries	59%	34%	6%	100% (N=32)
Total	**46%**	**45%**	**9%**	**100% (N=580)**

Table 5: Current status by country of origin

When analysed by country of origin, we found that respondents from Congo-Brazzaville, DRC and Ethiopia were significantly more like to be asylum seekers than respondents from any other countries. In contrast, respondents from Angola and Rwanda were the most likely to have been granted refugee status. This is probably linked to the fact that the long-lasting wars in Angola and Rwanda provide fairly "clear-cut" cases to the Department of Home Affairs that justify respondents' seeking of political asylum. Respondents from Somalia were by far significantly more likely to indicate that they were once granted refugee status but now their status has been reversed to that of being asylum seekers.

APPEALS

	N	**%**
Yes	49	8
No, my application hasn't been rejected	533	92
Total	**582**	**100**

Table 6: If your application was rejected, have you submitted an appeal?

Only 8% of respondents in our sample indicated that they were in the process of appealing the decisions made by the Department of Home Affairs on their applications. While not statistically significant, there was a tendency for respondents from Congo Brazzaville and Ethiopia to indicate that they had lodged appeals with the Department.

	N	%
I haven't received an answer yet	35	71
Appeal was successful and was granted refugee status	6	12
My application was rejected and I need to leave the country	4	8
Other	4	8
Total	**49**	**100**

Table 7: What was the outcome of your appeal?

As shown in the above table, most of the respondents indicated that they are still awaiting an answer from the Department of Home Affairs on their appeals. This could also mean that the Department of Home Affairs might have sent notifications on the appeals to respondents to an address at which respondents no longer reside and for this reason they might still assume that Home Affairs has yet to make a decision.

AGE OF RESPONDENTS

The average age of respondents was 30 years. The youngest person interviewed was 16 years old and the oldest 77 years.

Country of origin	Average age
Rwanda	33
Somalia	32
DRC	31
Angola	29
Burundi	29
Congo-Brazzaville	29
Other countries	29
Ethiopia	27

Table 8: Average age of respondents by country of origin

On average, respondents from Rwanda, Somalia and DRC tended to be slightly older than respondents from all other countries in the sample.

	16-24 years	25-29 years	30-34 years	35+ years	Total
Angola	30%	27%	19%	24%	100% (N=124)
Burundi	12%	43%	35%	10%	100% (N=49)
Congo-Brazza	8%	45%	43%	5%	100% (N=40)
DRC	20%	26%	27%	27%	100% (N=145)
Ethiopia	17%	60%	23%	0%	100% (N=35)
Rwanda	20%	20%	31%	29%	100% (N=35)
Somalia	19%	29%	21%	31%	100% (N=130)
Other countries	22%	41%	19%	19%	100% (N=32)
Total	**20%**	**32%**	**25%**	**22%**	**100% (N=590)**

Table 9: Age of respondents by country of origin

Angolan respondents tended to be amongst the youngest respondents, while Somalis were significantly more likely to be amongst the oldest respondents. Respondents from Ethiopia and Congo-Brazzaville were the most likely to be between these two

extremes. Ethiopians had a tendency to be between 25 and 29 years of age, while Congo-Brazzaville tended to be slightly older, falling between 30 and 34 years of age.

Female respondents were significantly more likely to be younger than male respondents. Median age for male respondents was 29 years old compared to 27 years old for female respondents.

	Male	**Female**	**Total**
16-24 years	17%	34%	20%
25-29 years	33%	28%	32%
30-34 years	27%	16%	25%
35+ years	22%	22%	22%
Total	**100% (N=484)**	**100% (N=105)**	**100% (N=589)**

Table 10: Age by sex of respondent

Women in our sample were significantly more likely than men to fall between 16 and 24 years of age (34% vs. 17%, respectively). Male respondents had a tendency to fall between 30 and 34 years of age (27% of males compared to only 16% of women).

MARITAL STATUS

	N	**%**
Single (never married)	300	51
Living with partner	33	6
Married and living together	127	22
Married but temporarily living apart	21	4
Married but spouse/partner living in other country	62	11
Divorced	19	3
Separated	8	1
Widowed	14	2
Other	3	1
Total	**587**	**100**

Table 11: What is your current marital status?

Male respondents in our sample were significantly more likely to be single, while female respondents tended to be separated, divorced or widowed. This is not surprising, considering that if they were married, female asylum seekers and refugees probably would be included in their husband's refugee applications instead of having separate applications.

Considering that Angolan respondents are amongst the youngest in our sample, it is not surprising that they were the most likely to be single, while Rwandan and Somali respondents, who tended to be older, were the most likely to be married and living together with their partners. In contrast, respondents from the DRC were significantly more likely to be married but with partners living apart, usually due to being in different countries.

FLUENCY IN ENGLISH

Given the importance of having knowledge of English in South Africa to be able to work or study, we asked respondents whether they were fluent in English.

	Fluent in English		
	No	**Yes**	**Total**
Angola	24%	76%	100% (N=124)
Burundi	35%	65%	100% (N=49)
Congo-Brazza	40%	60%	100% (N=40)
DRC	32%	68%	100% (N=145)
Ethiopia	20%	80%	100% (N=35)
Rwanda	37%	63%	100% (N=35)
Somalia	49%	51%	100% (N=130)
Other countries	9%	91%	100% (N=32)
Total	**33%**	**67%**	**100% (N=590)**

Table 12: Fluency in English by country of origin

Over two thirds of respondents indicated that they are fluent in English. In particular, respondents from Angola and those from "other countries" which include English speaking countries such as Liberia and Uganda amongst others, were the most likely to indicate that they are fluent in English. Somalis, despite the fact that they tended to have been in South Africa for the longest period of time, were the least likely to be fluent in English. This might point to the extensive social networks within the Somali community. The Somali community provides for its own religious, cultural, educational, business and other economic interests, thus making it less necessary for Somalis to be fluent in English.

There were no significant differences regarding fluency in English based on the sex or age of respondents.

LEVEL OF EDUCATION

	N	**%**
No formal schooling	22	4
Primary education	53	9
Secondary education	166	28
Matric (Secondary/High school certificate)	199	34
Tertiary education	127	22
Post graduate degree (masters, doctorate)	15	3
Post graduate diploma	8	1
Total	**590**	**100**

Table 13: Highest level of education completed

The above table reaffirms that a large proportion of asylum seekers and refugees who come to South Africa possess high levels of education. More than 50% of the respondents interviewed had completed Matric or a higher level of education. In

particular, one quarter of the sample had completed tertiary education. Very few respondents had no formal schooling or primary education only (13%).

If we compare these figures with figures from the 1996 Census for Gauteng province, we find that asylum seekers and refugees in our sample tended to have higher levels of education than Africans in Gauteng. To illustrate, 12% of Africans in Gauteng do not have any formal schooling, while only 4% of respondents in our sample indicated that this was the case. Moreover, only 3% of African males in Gauteng have completed tertiary education compared to 26% of asylum seekers and refugees in our sample.

	African		**White**		**Coloured**		**Indian**	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
No schooling	12	12	1	1	4	4	3	6
Some primary	15	14	1	1	6	7	3	6
Complete primary	8	9	0	1	5	7	2	5
Some secondary	38	42	25	29	51	52	30	33
Grade 12	16	15	34	39	23	20	37	32
Higher	3	4	23	18	5	5	14	10

Table 14: Level of education amongst those aged 20 years and more in Gauteng, by sex and race (percent)[3]

	Primary education or less	**Secondary education**	**Matric**	**Tertiary education or higher**	**Total**
Angola	6%	38%	43%	14%	100% (N=124)
Burundi	22%	27%	45%	6%	100% (N=49)
Congo-Brazza	3%	23%	33%	43%	100% (N=40)
DRC	2%	15%	35%	48%	100% (N=145)
Ethiopia	3%	29%	49%	20%	100% (N=35)
Rwanda	14%	29%	23%	34%	100% (N=35)
Somalia	36%	37%	15%	12%	100% (N=130)
Other countries	0%	22%	47%	31%	100% (N=32)
Total	**13%**	**28%**	**34%**	**25%**	**100% (N=590)**

Table 15: Level of education by country of origin

There were no significant differences on education level between male and female respondents. However, we found that Burundian and Somali respondents tended to be the least educated, while respondents from DRC and Congo-Brazzaville were amongst the most educated. Angolans were most likely to have completed secondary education or Matric.

Over half of the respondents in our sample, particularly those with tertiary education or higher, indicated that they had a certificate, degree or diploma.

[3] Statistics obtained from the 1996 Census.

	Degree	Certificate	Diploma	Total
Commerce/public admin/financial mgmt	20%	7%	20%	13%
English language	4%	20%	4%	12%
Security	0%	9%	0%	5%
Engineering & tech fields (mechanic, electrician)	9%	16%	14%	14%
Physical sciences	13%	14%	13%	13%
IT/Computing	4%	10%	18%	12%
Medical sciences	7%	4%	2%	4%
Education & teaching	6%	5%	13%	8%
Social Sciences	37%	9%	11%	13%
Other	0%	8%	5%	6%
Total	**100% (N=54)**	**100% (N=228)**	**100% (N=137)**	**100% (N=419)**

Table 16: Type of qualification by field of study

Respondents who indicated that they had degrees were most likely to have these degrees in one of the social sciences, while respondents who had diplomas were most likely to have these in the field of computing/IT or commerce/financial management. Respondents who had certificates often specialised in English language, or engineering and/or technical fields.

OCCUPATION AND EMPLOYMENT

For comparative purposes, we asked respondents about the occupation that they had before they came to South Africa, as well as about their current occupation. The following table outlines in detail the occupations that respondents held prior to their arrival to the country.

	N	%
Student	242	41
Sales occupations	86	15
Teaching professions	42	7
Managerial & executive occupations	25	4
Unemployed	21	4
Construction trades	21	4
Social, recreational, religious workers & artists	20	3
Transport occupations	19	3
Nursing	17	3
Service occupations	17	3
Mechanics & repairers	14	2
Labourers	12	2
Farmers	11	2
Financial managers	8	1
Engineers	8	1
Secretarial &administrative occupations	8	1
Tailors & dressmakers	7	1
Journalists & photographers	5	1
Lawyers	2	0
Total	**585**	**100**

Table 17: What was your occupation before you came to South Africa?

The largest proportion of respondents in our sample (41%) indicated that they were students before they came to South Africa. The majority of these students were studying at secondary school level (71%), followed by 24% studying at tertiary level. This is to be expected considering that the majority of asylum seekers and refugees interviewed were in their late 20s or early 30s. Moreover, it is not unlikely for students to be a grouping that requests asylum, considering that students might be more prone to be involved in politics and willing to challenge oppressive practices.

Respondents held a variety of occupations but only 4% of the sample indicated that they were unemployed.

To facilitate analysis and comparison, the above categories were grouped into skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled occupations. Skilled occupations include mainly teachers, lawyers, engineers, managers, supervisors, and journalists. Semi-skilled occupations include building trades, mechanics, electricians, sales trades, hairdressers and tailors, while unskilled occupations group together labourers, drivers, peasant farmers, and administrative jobs.

	N	%
Student	243	41
Semi-skilled occupations	138	24
Skilled occupations	102	17
Unskilled occupations	84	14
Unemployed	21	4
Total	**588**	**100**

Table 18: Type of occupations before coming to South Africa according to skills levels

Two fifths of the sample worked in semi-skilled or skilled occupations before coming to South Africa. There were no significant differences in the type of occupation by sex of respondent.

	Skilled occupations	Semi-skilled occupations	Unskilled occupations	Student	Total
Angola	14%	20%	20%	47%	100% (N=122)
Burundi	15%	25%	17%	44%	100% (N=48)
Congo-Brazza	13%	8%	3%	77%	100% (N=39)
DRC	26%	26%	10%	37%	100% (N=140)
Ethiopia	3%	55%	15%	27%	100% (N=33)
Rwanda	23%	17%	17%	43%	100% (N=35)
Somalia	17%	24%	21%	38%	100% (N=118)
Other countries	22%	31%	3%	44%	100% (N=32)
Total	**18%**	**24%**	**15%**	**43%**	**100% (N=567)**

Table 19: Occupation before coming to South Africa by country of origin

Respondents from the DRC, who were amongst the best educated in our sample, were also the most likely to have been engaged in skilled occupations prior to coming to South Africa. In contrast, Somali respondents, who possessed lower levels of education in our sample, were the most likely to be employed in unskilled jobs. Congo-Brazzaville respondents were the most likely to be students prior to their arrival in South Africa.

Respondents' form of employment changes dramatically when one analyses the types of occupations that they are currently engaged in. The table below provides substantial detail on these occupations.

	N	%
Vendor - seller	189	32
Unemployed	175	30
Student	32	6
Piece jobs - unspecified	31	5
Unskilled worker	28	5
Security guard	15	3
Hairdresser/beautician	11	2
Building trades	11	2
Shop assistant/manager	10	2
Mechanic	10	2
Car watch & wash	9	2
Supervisor/manager	9	2
Teacher/principal/tutor	8	1
Administrator/secretary	8	1
Driver	6	1
Dressmaker/tailor	6	1
Artist	5	1
Electrician	5	1
Translator	4	1
Technician/IT	4	1
Photographer	2	0

	N	%
Machine operator	2	0
Engineer	1	0
Nursing	1	0
Pastor	1	0
Total	**583**	**100**

Table 20: What is your current occupation?

By looking at the table above, two immediate observations can be made. Firstly, whereas 4% of the respondents indicated that they were unemployed before coming to South Africa, this number increases almost eight-fold at present. This unemployment figure of 30% compares to the unemployment rate for Gauteng at 28%; however, the main difference is that a large proportion of asylum seekers and refugees who reported being currently unemployed have for the most part completed secondary school education and used to be employed in skilled or semi-skilled occupations prior to coming to South Africa[4]. Secondly, a cursory look at the list of current occupations shows that a large proportion of respondents are engaged in occupations that require low levels of skills. The simplified table below confirms this finding.

	N	%
Unskilled occupations	250	43
Unemployed	175	30
Semi-skilled occupations	100	17
Student	32	6
Skilled occupations	27	5
Total	**584**	**100**

Table 21: Current occupation according to level of skill

Over two fifths of respondents (43%) are currently engaged in unskilled occupations such as selling goods on the street, or engaging in piece jobs such as car watch or car wash. Only 5% of the sample indicated that they are employed in highly skilled occupations. There were no significant differences in current occupation based on the sex of the respondent.

		Current occupation in South Africa					
		Skilled	*Semi-skilled*	*Unskilled*	*Student*	*Unemployed*	*Total*
Occup. before SA	Skilled	7%	9%	47%	3%	34%	100% (N=102)
	Semi-skilled	2%	26%	40%	4%	29%	100% (N=136)
	Unskilled	2%	20%	52%	0%	26%	100% (N=82)
	Student	6%	16%	39%	10%	29%	100% (N=242)
	Unemployed	0%	5%	43%	0%	52%	100% (N=21)
	Total	**5%**	**17%**	**43%**	**6%**	**30%**	**100% (N=583)**

Table 22: Current occupation in South Africa by occupation before coming to South Africa

Even though the above table is not statistically significant, it is nonetheless illustrative of the changes in occupation that respondents have generally experienced upon arrival in South Africa. For instance, 8 out of 10 respondents who were engaged in skilled or

[4] Statistics obtained from *Census in Brief*, 1999, Statistics South Africa (1996 census data).

semi-skilled occupations prior to coming to South Africa are now either involved in unskilled occupations or unemployed. Considering the emphasis of South African immigration law on attracting individuals with skills to the country, it is ironic that asylum seekers and refugees who possess skills cannot exercise them while they are in the country.

	Skilled or semi-skilled	Unskilled	Student	Unemployed	Total
Angola	30%	28%	10%	33%	100% (N=120)
Burundi	35%	51%	0%	14%	100% (N=49)
Congo-Brazza	35%	50%	10%	5%	100% (N=40)
DRC	14%	38%	4%	44%	100% (N=144)
Ethiopia	9%	69%	6%	17%	100% (N=35)
Rwanda	11%	69%	14%	6%	100% (N=35)
Somalia	17%	44%	2%	37%	100% (N=129)
Other countries	34%	38%	6%	22%	100% (N=32)
Total	**22%**	**43%**	**6%**	**30%**	**100% (N=584)**

Table 23: Type of current occupation by country of origin

The table above shows some puzzling findings. Respondents from Congo Brazzaville, DRC and Angola were amongst the better educated in our sample; however, while respondents from Congo Brazzaville and Angola were the most likely to be currently engaged in skilled or semi-skilled occupations, DRC respondents were the most likely to be unemployed. This is difficult to understand especially when DRC respondents were also the most likely to be engaged in skilled occupations before coming to South Africa. One might be tempted to look at language as a barrier that might impact on DRC respondents' ability to engage in more skilled occupations.

	Not fluent in English	Fluent in English	Total
Medium or highly skilled	23%	78%	100% (N=71)
Low skilled	30%	71%	100% (N=292)
Unemployed	46%	54%	100% (N=188)
Student	9%	91%	100% (N=32)
Total	**33%**	**67%**	**100% (N=583)**

Table 24: Fluency in English by type of occupation

The ability of respondents' to be fluent in English seems to have a significant influence on the kind of occupation that respondents presently hold. More specifically, respondents who are in skilled or semi-skilled occupations or those who are students are the most likely to be fluent in English.

However, there were no significant differences in English fluency between respondents from Congo Brazzaville, Angola or the DRC. This difference seems to arise from the fact that a significant proportion of DRC respondents who indicated that they are unemployed are asylum seekers who arrived on or after April 2000 and therefore do not have permission to work.

Another puzzling finding involves Burundian respondents. According to the information gathered, Burundian respondents, together with Somalis, were amongst the most likely to have completed up to primary education in our sample. Yet, Burundian respondents were significantly more likely (together with respondents from Angola and Congo Brazzaville) to be employed in skilled occupations. This might be explained by the fact that, while not statistically significant, an important percentage of Burundian respondents (45%) also indicated that they had completed Matric.

Not surprisingly, Somali respondents, who were more likely to have received the least amount of education in our sample, were also more likely to indicate that they are currently unemployed.

HOUSEHOLD SIZE[5]

The average household size for our sample is 3.5 people. If compared to the average household size for African households in Gauteng which is 4.0 persons[6], this shows that on average, asylum seeker and refugee households tend to be slightly smaller. This might be due to the significant number of single person households in our sample. The smallest household in our sample consisted of one person, while the largest contained 14 people. One quarter of the entire sample consisted of households of one person only.

	N	**%**
One person	155	26
Two people	78	13
Three people	104	18
Four people	87	15
Five people	67	11
Six people	33	6
Seven people	20	3
Eight people	22	4
Nine people or more	24	4
Total	**590**	**100**

Table 25: Breakdown of household size in the sample

Since there are a number of outlying values that could distort the average, the table below provides the median for household size by country of origin. The median is a measure of central tendency not sensitive to outlying values -- unlike the mean, which can be affected by a few extremely high or low values.

[5] For the purposes of this study, C A S E relies on the Statistics SA definition of household which states that "a household is defined as a person, or group of persons, who occupy a common dwelling unit for at least four days a week and who provide themselves with food and other essentials for living. Basically, they live together as a unit".
[6] 1996 Census figures.

	Household size median
Ethiopia	1
Other countries	1
Angola	3
Congo-Brazzaville	3
Somalia	3
Burundi	4
DRC	4
Rwanda	4

Table 26: Household size median, by country of origin

Ethiopian households and those made up of members from the grouping of other countries were amongst the smallest in our sample, whereas households of respondents from Burundi, DRC and Rwanda were amongst the largest.

DEPENDENTS

In addition to asking about household size, we asked respondents if they had any dependents, either in South Africa or elsewhere and whether they support those dependents financially. It is important to note that dependents staying with respondents in South Africa are likely to be part of the household, unlike dependents who are staying elsewhere.

Forty-three percent of our sample indicated that they had no dependents. Considering that Ethiopian households tended to be the smallest in our sample, it is not surprising that Ethiopian respondents were the most likely to have no dependents. Conversely, respondents from the DRC were the most likely to indicate that they have dependents.

For respondents in our sample who have dependents (57%), the table below provides a breakdown of their number.

	N	**%**
1 dependent	48	14
2 dependents	73	22
3 dependents	55	16
4 dependents	51	15
5 dependents	38	11
6 dependents	22	7
7 dependents	18	5
8 dependents	8	2
9 dependents	11	3
10 dependents	11	3
Total	**335**	**100**

Table 27: Breakdown of dependents in our sample

Excluding those respondents who do not have any dependents, on average, respondents in our sample had 3.8 dependents.

	1 to 3 dependents	More than 3 dependents	Total
Angola	59%	41%	100%
Burundi	65%	35%	100%
Congo-Brazza	90%	11%	100%
DRC	39%	62%	100%
Ethiopia	100%	0%	100%
Rwanda	75%	25%	100%
Somalia	43%	57%	100%
Other countries	61%	39%	100%
Total	**53% (N=182)**	**47% (N=160)**	**100% (N=342)**

Table 28: Number of dependents by country of origin

Respondents from Congo Brazzaville, Ethiopia and Rwanda were significantly more likely to have up to 3 dependents, while respondents from DRC and Somalia were the most likely to have more than 3 dependents.

Approximately half of all dependents in our sample (51%) are not currently in South Africa, but have tended to remain behind in the respondents' country of origin.

	N	%
None in SA	122	36
Some in SA	57	17
All in SA	155	46
Total	**334**	**100**

Table 29:Proportion of dependents that are inside of South Africa

Where respondents indicated that they have dependents, we found that in the majority of cases either all dependents are with the respondent in South Africa or none of them are here. Respondents from DRC were significantly more likely to have some dependents in South Africa, whereas respondents from Congo-Brazzaville and Rwanda were the most likely to have all their dependents in South Africa.

Considering the difficult economic situation that most asylum seekers and refugees experience in South Africa, we tried to find out whether respondents are financially responsible for dependents outside of South Africa.

	N	%
No	82	45
Yes	100	55
Total	**182**	**100**

Table 30: Dependents outside South Africa who are supported financially

Where respondents have dependents outside South Africa, the majority of them (55%) are supporting these dependents financially. Unfortunately, cell sizes are too small to conduct any analysis by country of origin. There were no significant differences between number of dependents and household income.

INCOME

MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME

We asked respondents to tell us about the total monthly income that their household, or family unit, receives. This income could have been obtained as a result of different forms of work, remittances, or assistance from different organisations or friends.

Where the family unit consisted of one person or of blood-related relatives, it was generally easy for the respondent to indicate the total monthly income for the family unit or household. However, where respondents stated that their family unit was made up of friends, who they share resources with and cook with, they sometimes had difficulty in trying to assess what each of those friends contributes to household income. Taking into account this shortcoming, income data should be interpreted with extreme caution, as it is likely that some households might be underreporting their total monthly household income.

Monthly household income ranged from nothing (5% of the sample) to more than R3500 (11% of the sample).

	Nothing	**Less than R799**	**R800-R1099**	**R1100-R1499**	**R1500-R1999**	**R2000-R2499**	**R2500-R3499**	**R3500+**	**Total**
1 person	12%	27%	20%	16%	16%	6%	3%	0%	100% (N=146)
2 people	1%	16%	14%	24%	11%	17%	10%	6%	100% (N=70)
3 people	2%	5%	14%	17%	24%	15%	16%	8%	100% (N=88)
4 people	3%	7%	12%	13%	24%	12%	17%	12%	100% (N=75)
5 people	7%	5%	8%	12%	20%	10%	20%	20%	100% (N=61)
6 people or more	1%	13%	9%	8%	17%	10%	13%	30%	100% (N=91)
Total	**5%**	**14%**	**14%**	**15%**	**18%**	**11%**	**12%**	**11%**	**100% (N=531)**

Table 31: Household size by household monthly income

Generally, we found that the larger the household, the larger the total monthly income. In particular, households composed of one person were significantly more likely to earn up to R1100 per month, whereas households of five people or more were significantly more likely to earn R2500 or more each month.

PER CAPITA INCOME

Relying on household income, we calculated approximate per capita income for our sample. This measurement should be interpreted with caution for the following reason. When we asked respondents about their total household income, we asked

them to indicate whether their household income fell within a particular range and not an exact number. To calculate per capita income, we calculated the midpoint for each of those income brackets and then divided it by the total number of people in the household. We found that average monthly per capita income for the sample is R676, whereas the median value for monthly per capita income was R571. Considering that there were a few cases where household income was quite high, the median value is likely to be more reliable. In other words, this measure indicates that each person in a household is likely to have access to less than R600 each month.

	Mean	**Median**	**Minimum**	**Maximum**
Congo-Brazza	R1168	R917	R219	R3250
Other countries	R1037	R950	R317	R2250
Ethiopia	R891	R933	R175	R2250
Somalia	R714	R583	R0	R3250
Rwanda	R650	R583	R250	R1750
Angola	R612	R456	R0	R2250
DRC	R513	R438	R0	R3250
Burundi	R453	R350	R0	R1750

Table 32: Per capita income by country of origin

If per capita monthly income is disaggregated by country of origin, it can be observed that each respondent in the sample largely lives off a total of less than R1000. Respondents from Congo Brazzaville who were likely to be employed in skilled occupations were also likely to have a higher per capita income than respondents from other countries. In this same vein, considering that respondents from DRC were amongst the most likely to be unemployed, it is not surprising that they have amongst the lowest per capita income of the sample.

For comparative purposes, it is useful to compare the figures we obtained in our sample to those for African urban households in South Africa[7]. Monthly per capita income for urban Africans is R488[8]. This amount is approximately R100 lower than the figure we obtained for asylum seekers and refugees in our sample. A higher per capita income amongst asylum seekers and refugees might be linked to the fact that asylum seekers and refugees in our sample have relatively high levels of education, which would in turn suggest that they were unlikely to be part of the poorest sections of society in their countries of origin.

[7] Urban comparisons are being drawn due to the fact that Gauteng is approximately 97% urban.
[8] This data was extracted from Statistics South Africa, *Income and Expenditure Survey 2000 (South Africa)*, p.23.

MAIN SOURCE OF INCOME

	N	%
Selling goods	151	26
My wages from employment	135	23
Piece jobs	92	16
Wages of another member of the household	89	15
Gifts/money/remittances	86	15
Assistance from NGOs/Churches/mosques	20	3
No source of income	17	3
Total	**590**	**100**

Table 33: What is this family unit's main source of income?

In the majority of cases (65%), the main source of income for the household was the work performed by the respondent himself or herself. A word of caution is necessary with regards to the top three categories of the table. In some cases, if the respondent was a street trader s/he indicated the source of income to be his/her own wages, while in other cases the respondent provided greater detail, such as selling goods or piece jobs. For this reason, and to avoid unnecessary confusion, it is important to collapse the first three categories of the table into one, since they all involve work performed by the respondent.

Some households (15%) rely on the income generated by other members of the household, while others (15%) rely largely on gifts or remittances from a number of sources as their main source of income.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

We found that 63% of the sample does not receive any form of financial assistance. There were no significant differences based on the sex of the respondent. However, respondents from Burundi and Congo-Brazzaville were the least likely to receive any financial assistance, while Angolan respondents were the most likely. Those who do receive assistance (220 respondents), receive it from the following sources.

	Yes	
	N	%
Rely on friends and/or relatives in SA	105	48%
Rely on friends and/or relatives outside SA	93	42%
Rely on NGOs/churches or mosques in SA	40	18%
Receive other types of financial assistance	7	3%

Table 34: Sources of financial assistance

Almost half of those who receive assistance (48%) rely on friends or relatives within South Africa to provide financial assistance. Somalis were the most likely to rely on friends or relatives in South Africa while Rwandans were the least likely to rely on this source. In addition, over two fifths of respondents who receive assistance rely on friends or relatives outside of South Africa to assist financially. There were no significant differences in reliance on outside assistance by country of origin.

OTHER CURRENT FORMS OF ASSISTANCE

	Yes	No	Total
Assistance with shelter	10%	90%	100% (N=590)
Assistance with clothing	5%	95%	100% (N=590)
Assistance with asylum procedure	10%	90%	100% (N=590)
Assistance with piece jobs/temp work	6%	94%	100% (N=590)
Assistance with study loans	1%	99%	100% (N=590)
Assistance with skills training	4%	96%	100% (N=590)

Table 35: Different types of assistance currently received

As it can be observed, very few respondents are currently receiving any kind of assistance. Only 10% of the sample are receiving assistance with shelter/housing or the asylum procedure. Where provided, assistance with housing is provided on a monthly basis, whereas assistance with the asylum procedure is often provided on a once-off basis.

Respondents who are receiving assistance with piece jobs/temporary and skills provision mostly receive this assistance once a month, whereas assistance with clothing is often provided on a once-off basis.

EXPERIENCES UPON ARRIVAL IN SOUTH AFRICA

In our survey we included a number of questions aimed to gather information about asylum seekers' experiences upon arrival in South Africa. In particular, this section focuses on respondents' year of arrival in South Africa, whether they arrived alone or with family as well as the points of entry used. In addition, this section explores respondents' experience with shelter/housing as well as access to food upon arrival.

Over half of the respondents in our sample (59%) arrived on or after the year 2000. The majority of respondents (67%) came to South Africa by themselves. In contrast, we found that female respondents and Rwandan respondents (both male and female) were significantly more likely than all other respondents to state that they came with family or friends. Taking into account where respondents came from, they usually relied on the closest border post to come into South Africa.

Most asylum seekers in our sample had Section 22 asylum permits, while most refugees had Section 24 refugee permits. However, only three refugees in our sample had been issued with a maroon identity document.

Upon arrival, respondents generally stayed with people who they had some familiarity with. Half of the respondents in our sample stayed with refugee friends, while 16% stayed with relatives, and 10% stayed with people from their same country even though they did not know them. Only 4% of respondents stayed at a shelter when they first arrived. These findings generally point to the existence of social networks amongst asylum seekers and refugees. Respondents usually stayed longer in places where they had some connection to the residents.

With regard to access to food, we found that 23% of respondents had received food assistance within the first three months of arrival in South Africa. Over half of these respondents (57%) stated that they received this assistance from churches or mosques, while a quarter of the respondents also indicated that they received assistance from JRS. In most cases this food assistance was provided once per month.

YEAR OF ARRIVAL IN SOUTH AFRICA

The table below provides a breakdown of respondents' year of arrival in South Africa.

	N	%
Arrived between 1990 & 1996	66	11
Arrived in 1997	55	9
Arrived in 1998	42	7
Arrived in 1999	79	13
Arrived in 2000	119	20
Arrived in 2001	154	26
Arrived in 2002	75	13
Total	**590**	**100**

Table 36: Breakdown of arrival of respondents to South Africa

Over half of the respondents in our sample (59%) arrived on or after the year 2000. Respondents from Congo Brazzaville, Somalia and Angola were significantly more likely to have arrived before 2000 than all other respondents. In contrast, respondents from DRC and Burundi were significantly more likely to have arrived on or after the year 2000.

ARRIVING ALONE, WITH FAMILY OR FRIENDS?

	N	%
I am here alone	396	67
I have come with family/dependents	152	26
I have come with friends from my home country	35	6
I already have family/dependents in South Africa	6	1
Total	**589**	**100**

Table 37: Did you come to South Africa alone, with family or friends?

The majority of respondents (67%) indicated that they came to South Africa by themselves. This was followed by one third of the sample that either came with family, dependents or friends from their home country. We found that female respondents and Rwandan respondents (both male and female) were significantly more likely than all other respondents to state that they came with family or friends. The majority of Rwandan respondents tended to be older than 30 years of age; moreover, most of these respondents indicated that they were married, living together with their partners and had between one and five dependents.

POINTS OF ENTRY

In addition to asking when respondents arrived, we asked respondents what points of entry they used, as well as which Refugee Reception Office they reported to.

	Zimbabwe border	Mozambican border	Swaziland border	Namibian border	Airport	Total
Angola	3%	8%	0%	50%	39%	100% (N=120)
Burundi	48%	40%	2%	4%	6%	100% (N=48)
Congo-Brazza	3%	0%	0%	13%	85%	100% (N=40)
DRC	60%	16%	3%	6%	16%	100% (N=142)
Ethiopia	3%	39%	49%	0%	9%	100% (N=33)
Rwanda	35%	59%	6%	0%	0%	100% (N=34)
Somalia	9%	58%	30%	3%	0%	100% (N=124)
Other countries	42%	17%	4%	0%	38%	100% (N=24)
Total	**26%**	**29%**	**11%**	**14%**	**21%**	**100% (N=565)**

Table 38: What entry point did you use to come into South Africa?

Taking into account where respondents came from, they usually relied on the closest border post to come into South Africa. The largest proportion of respondents (29%), most likely to be Somali and Rwandese respondents, came into South Africa through the Mozambican border, whereas a quarter of respondents (26%), predominantly Burundi and DRC respondents, came to South Africa through the border with Zimbabwe.

Angolan respondents were the most likely to have come to South Africa through the Namibian border, while respondents from Congo Brazzaville were the most likely to have come to the country by plane. Somalis and Ethiopians were amongst the most likely to have come to South Africa through the Swazi border.

	N	%
Johannesburg – Braamfontein	305	52
Pretoria	243	41
Nelspruit	14	2
Cape Town	11	2
Durban	10	2
Port Elizabeth	4	1
Total	**587**	**100**

Table 39: What Refugee Reception Centre did you report to?

Over half of the respondents (52%) initially reported to the Braamfontein Refugee Reception Office in Johannesburg, while two fifths reported to the Pretoria Refugee Reception Office.

Since the interviews were conducted in Johannesburg and Pretoria, this might show that respondents have not generally changed their place of residence. Most of them are still in Johannesburg and Pretoria. In particular, respondents who indicated that they reported to the Braamfontein Refugee Reception Office mostly work within Johannesburg, while those who reported to the Pretoria office are still working in the Pretoria area.

However, this lack of movement to other parts of the country might be due to the fact that it is extremely difficult for applications to be transferred from the Refugee Reception Office in one city to another across the country, thus making it easier for respondents to continue to renew their documents at the same place where they reported to upon arrival.

A few respondents mentioned that they reported to Nelspruit as a refugee reception office. While this office no longer exists, most of these cases involved Somali refugees who arrived in the country between 1990 and 1999.

	Asylum Seekers	**Refugees**
	%	**%**
Holding Section 22 Permit	97%	3%
Holding Section 24 Permit (Refugee Status)	0%	98%
Holding Section 41 Permit	2%	4%
Holding RSA Travel Document	0%	32%
Holding Letter of Must Leave	0%	0%
Holding Maroon Identity Document (Refugee ID)	0%	1%
Holding Rejection Letter	2%	0%
Holding other document issued by SA government	2%	0%
Total	**N=266**	**N=260**

Table 40: Type of documentation held by respondents, by current status

As expected, most asylum seekers in our sample were holding Section 22 asylum permits, while most refugees were holding Section 24 refugee permits. Despite the fact that the Department of Home Affairs agreed to issue maroon identity documents starting in May 2001, only three refugees in our sample indicated that they are holding this document. About one third of refugees indicated that they have an RSA travel document.

SHELTER AND HOUSING

In our study, we asked questions about shelter and housing at two different stages of respondents' stay in South Africa. Firstly, we asked respondents where they stayed when they first arrived and how they found out about where to stay. As part of this, we asked respondents specifically whether they had ever stayed at a shelter and the kinds of assistance that they obtained at those shelters. Secondly, we asked respondents where they are presently staying. This latter issue will be dealt with later on in the study.

Upon arrival, respondents generally sought refuge with people who they had some affinity or familiarity with. This is demonstrated in the table below. Half of the respondents in our sample stayed with refugee friends when they first arrived in South Africa, while 16% stayed with relatives, and 10% stayed with people from their same country even though they did not know them. Female respondents, who were more

likely to come into the country with dependents, family or friends, were also the most likely to stay with relatives upon arrival.

	N	%
With refugee friends	303	52
With relatives	93	16
With people from my country I didn't know	57	10
Outside – on the street or park	31	5
At a hotel/guest house/lodge	30	5
At a shelter	24	4
Church/mosque	24	4
Other places	22	4
Total	**584**	**100**

Table 41: Where did you stay when you first arrived in South Africa?

This reliance on entities that fall outside of the purview of government might indicate respondents' awareness that the government provides very limited assistance to newcomers or a willingness to stay with people who have some understanding of their own difficult situation. More importantly, however, this finding in all likelihood also points to the existence of social networks amongst asylum seekers and refugees. Unfortunately, we failed to include a question in our survey asking respondents whether they found out about where to stay prior or after their arrival in South Africa. For this reason, it is difficult to assess how far these networks extend and where respondents' reliance on them might start.

It is interesting that only 4% of respondents stayed at a shelter when they first arrived. This might be due to the fact that respondents lack knowledge about shelters upon arrival or because they know that conditions at shelters are basic and therefore avoid them if possible. Alternatively, as indicated above, this finding might also point to the strength of social networks in assisting respondents in finding a place to stay upon arrival.

The fact that 5% of our sample stayed outside in parks or on the street upon arrival also serves to highlight the importance of establishing better reception processes for asylum seekers and refugees.

Cell sizes were unfortunately too small to analyse this information by country of origin. Instead, we tried to analyse the results by language group to test whether being fluent in English might have facilitated access in comparison to respondents who might be French or Portuguese speakers. However, when analysed by language group, there were no significant differences between respondents.

We found that respondents interviewed in Pretoria were significantly more likely, when they first arrived, to have stayed with people from their same country but who they didn't know. In contrast, respondents interviewed in Johannesburg were significantly more likely to have stayed at a hotel, guesthouse or lodge, albeit temporarily, as the table below shows.

	Up to 1 month	2 to 5 months	6 to 12 months	More than 1 year	Total
At a shelter	21%	21%	46%	13%	100% (N=24)
With refugee friends	26%	44%	24%	6%	100% (N=300)
With people from my country I didn't know	41%	35%	19%	6%	100% (N=54)
With relatives	13%	32%	33%	22%	100% (N=91)
At a hotel/guest house/lodge	43%	30%	20%	7%	100% (N=30)
Other place	64%	23%	14%	0%	100% (N=22)
Outside	65%	29%	7%	0%	100% (N=31)
Church	33%	33%	21%	13%	100% (N=24)
Total	**30%**	**38%**	**24%**	**9%**	**100% (N=576)**

Table 42: Length of stay, by place of stay upon arrival to South Africa

Respondents usually stayed longer in places where they had some connection to the residents. For instance, respondents who stayed with refugee friends upon arrival were more likely to stay there for 2 to 5 months, whereas those who stayed with relatives stayed for 6 months or longer. In contrast, those who stayed outside or with people who they did not know tended to stay for a period of up to one month only. The relatively short period of time that respondents spent sleeping outside could also be interpreted to mean that most respondents either have individual or community contacts.

	Yes	
	N	%
From refugee friends	306	52%
From relatives	109	18%
Asked strangers about where to find people from my home country	108	18%
Nobody helped me to decide where to stay	53	9%
From South African friends	24	4%
From NGOs working with asylum seekers/refugees	18	3%
From other sources	11	2%
From organisations run by refugees	5	1%
From Department of Home Affairs	3	1%
From churches	8	1%
From other government department/institution	1	0%

Table 43: Where did you find out about where to stay when you first arrived?

As argued earlier, respondents tended to rely predominantly on people they established some sort of relationship with, be they refugee friends, relatives, South African friends or people who would help them to establish that connection - as exemplified by those respondents who asked strangers about where they could find people from their home country – to find out where to stay. Unfortunately, it is difficult to determine whether respondents already had knowledge about where to stay before they arrived in South Africa and the extent of possible existing networks. This might have been the case, for instance, with respondents who relied on relatives and refugee friends to assist; however, this cannot be confirmed by the results of the study.

Nonetheless, the answers to this question are quite telling on a different angle. Only a minimal proportion of respondents indicated that they approached government institutions or authorities for assistance to find a place to stay. This could possibly be the result of two factors, namely, that there is very little referral information provided by the Department of Home Affairs or any other government department to asylum seekers upon arrival - be it verbally or by way of posters at the Reception Offices - and therefore asylum seekers do not know how to approach the government for assistance, or alternatively, asylum seekers find out very quickly from other acquaintances that the government barely has any systems in place to assist asylum seekers with shelter or any other basic need, thus pushing them to bypass government structures.

STAYING AT SHELTERS

There were two questions that asked respondents about staying at shelters. Shelter was one of the options that respondents could have given when we asked them where they stayed when they first arrived to South Africa. The other question asked respondents directly whether they had ever stayed at a shelter. There is a slight discrepancy in results from the two questions. As the reader might recall, 4% of respondents indicated that they had stayed at a shelter when they first arrived. However, when we asked them directly whether they had ever stayed at a shelter we found that 8% of respondents had done so. This discrepancy might be the result of the time limit on the first question, where we only asked about the period soon after arrival. Nonetheless, the results are quite surprising, as very few respondents frequent shelters.

If we analyse the results for the broader question regarding use of shelters, we find that 92% of respondents indicated that they had never stayed at a shelter. As it will be shown later on in the study, one of the reasons why respondents are not being able to access shelters might be because they do not have proper documentation or because the documentation they have is not recognised by administrative personnel at the shelters. Respondents from Rwanda were the most likely to have stayed at a shelter, whereas those from Congo Brazzaville were the least likely.

Of the 8% of our sample (49 respondents) who indicated that they had stayed at a shelter, the majority of them stayed at shelters run by churches or mosques, while 17 respondents stayed in private shelters.

	N	**%**
Run by church/mosque	30	63
Private	17	35
Other	1	2
Total	**48**	**100**

Table 44: What type of shelter was it?

It is of particular concern that no one mentioned that they stayed in public shelters. There is a possibility that some of the church or mosque-run shelters might be receiving a government subsidy if they are acting as implementing agents for the government. Alternatively, this might serve to confirm the lack of information or services provided by the government to assist asylum seekers and refugees.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to do any further analysis on this finding due to cell sizes being too small.

EXPERIENCES STAYING AT SHELTERS

We asked respondents who actually stayed at shelters whether they had ever experienced any obstacles in accessing them. As the table below shows, very few respondents who accessed shelters indicated that they had experienced any problems.

	Yes	
	N	**%**
I did not experience any obstacles	27	55%
Shelter access problem: No documentation/ID	9	18%
Shelter access problem: Xenophobia	9	18%
Shelter access problem: No money to pay fees	8	16%
Other shelter access problem	6	12%
Shelter access problem: The shelter was full	4	8%
Shelter access problem: The shelter allowed only South Africans to stay	1	2%
Shelter access problem: Inadequate facilities	1	2%

Table 45: Did you experience any problems in accessing the shelter?

Of the 49 respondents who stayed at shelters, over half of them indicated that they did not experience any obstacles in accessing a shelter. Some of the problems experienced included lack of documentation, xenophobia and the inability to pay for shelter fees.

	Yes	
	N	**%**
Did the shelter provide special accommodation for single mothers?	26	53%
Did the shelter provide special accommodation for unaccompanied minors?	18	37%

Table 46: Did the shelter provide special accommodation?

In about half of the cases where respondents stayed at shelters, shelters provided special accommodation for single mothers; however, in only 37% of the cases did the shelters provide accommodation for unaccompanied minors. The location of the shelter did not influence whether shelters provided these special types of accommodation.

In addition to asking about the type of shelter where they stayed, we asked respondents if they had to pay to stay at those shelters.

	N	%
Yes	19	39
No	30	61
Total	**49**	**100**

Table 47: Did you have to pay to stay at the shelter?

The majority of respondents (61%) who stayed at shelters did not have to pay. Those who had to pay to stay mostly paid less than R10 per day.

We asked respondents about the types of assistance that they received at the shelters where they stayed.

	Yes	
	N	**%**
Did you receive assistance with food?	32	65%
Did you receive assistance with toiletries?	21	43%
Did you receive referral information about Home Affairs?	13	27%
Did you receive assistance with clothing?	12	24%
Did you receive referral information on health issues?	11	23%
Did you receive referral information on education issues?	7	14%
Did you receive orientation on the asylum procedure?	7	14%
Did you receive referral information about children?	5	10%
Did you receive information or orientation on your rights/responsibilities as a refugee?	5	10%
Did you receive skills training/short courses?	5	10%

Table 48: What assistance did you receive at the shelter?

The majority of respondents who indicated that they stayed at shelters at least received assistance with food. In addition, two fifths received assistance with toiletries. Moreover, approximately one quarter of respondents who stayed in shelters received assistance with clothing and referral information about the Department of Home Affairs. However, despite these forms of assistance, it is of concern that asylum seekers and refugees are not receiving basic referral information about health, education, services for children and the asylum procedure at the shelters. In part this is probably due to the fact that shelters are not solely for asylum seekers and refugees but for individuals in need of assistance.

ACCESS TO FOOD

We asked respondents whether they or their respective family units had received any food assistance within the first three months of arrival in South Africa. While the majority of respondents never received any food assistance, almost one quarter of respondents (23% or 134 respondents) did. Receiving food assistance did not seem to be influenced by the sex of the respondent. Similar proportions of men and women in our sample received assistance.

	Yes	No	Total
Angola	23%	77%	100% (N=124)
Burundi	59%	41%	100% (N=49)
Congo-Brazza	10%	90%	100% (N=40)
DRC	21%	79%	100% (N=145)
Ethiopia	9%	91%	100% (N=35)
Rwanda	46%	54%	100% (N=35)
Somalia	13%	87%	100% (N=130)
Other countries	16%	84%	100% (N=32)
Total	**23%**	**77%**	**100% (N=590)**

Table 49: Did you or your family receive assistance with food within the first three months of arrival in South Africa?, by country of origin

Respondents from Burundi and Rwanda were significantly more likely to indicate that they received food assistance during their first three months in South Africa, while respondents from Congo Brazzaville, Ethiopia and Somalia were the least likely. Rwandans are likely to have received this assistance at the shelters where they stayed. In contrast, Burundian respondents mostly received this assistance from churches and mosques. The table below provides a breakdown of sources for all respondents who received food assistance.

	Yes	
	N	%
Got food assistance from churches/mosques	76	57%
Got food assistance from Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS)	35	26%
Got food assistance from refugees of same nationality as me	13	10%
Got food assistance from the shelter where I stay(ed)	9	7%
Got food assistance from other source	7	5%
Got food assistance from relatives	6	4%
Got food assistance from local soup kitchens	3	2%
Got food assistance from UNHCR	2	1%
Got food assistance from Cape Town Refugee Forum (CTRF)	1	1%
Got food assistance from NGOs run by refugees	2	1%
Got food assistance from refugees of another nationality	1	1%
Got food assistance from members of the local community	1	1%

Table 50: Where did you get food assistance from?

Of the respondents who received food assistance, over half of them (57%) stated that they received this assistance from churches or mosques, while a quarter of the respondents also indicated that they received assistance from JRS. Asylum seekers interviewed in Johannesburg were significantly more likely to get assistance from churches or mosques, whereas asylum seekers interviewed in Pretoria were significantly more likely to get assistance from JRS. Respondents who received assistance from JRS were significantly more likely to have been women. In most cases this food assistance was provided once per month.

INTERACTION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS

Given that every asylum seeker must interact with the Department of Home Affairs at different phases of their stay in South Africa, we asked respondents a series of questions linked to their experiences with the Refugee Reception Offices of the Department of Home Affairs. Firstly, we asked respondents to specify the date when they applied for refugee status, as well as the date when they were granted refugee status, if this had happened by the time of interview.

Two fifths of the sample applied between 1990 and April 2000, whereas the rest of the sample (58%) lodged their applications for refugee status on or after April 2000. It would seem that since the introduction of the Refugee Act of 1998 on April 1st 2000, asylum seekers have been waiting for shorter periods of time to have their status determined. For instance, only 15% of respondents who arrived before April 2000 were granted refugee status within six months of application, compared to 39% of those who applied on or after April 2000. We found that over a quarter (27%) of respondents who applied before April 2000 are still waiting for their status to be determined despite Home Affairs' attempts to clean up the backlog of cases. Over half of these respondents have waited for more than four years. There are also indications that a backlog is developing under the Refugee Act. Almost two thirds of respondents who applied under the Refugee Act of 1998 and who are still waiting for their status to be determined have been waiting for a period of up to two years.

Secondly, and linked to the period of status determination under the Refugee Act of 1998 which came into force on 1st April 2000, we tested respondents' knowledge about their right to petition the Standing Committee for the work and study prohibition to be lifted if six months expire from the date of submission of their applications without Home Affairs making a decision on them.

Taking into account that the Department of Home Affairs often takes longer than the stipulated six months in the Refugee Act to grant refugee status, it is of great concern that only one third of respondents - who applied under the Refugee Act and who had been waiting for longer than six months for Home Affairs to decide on their applications – knew that they had the right to petition for the work and study prohibition to be lifted.

Thirdly, we asked respondents whether they had ever experienced any barriers to access with the Department of Home Affairs at three particular stages. These stages are: Submission of an application for refugee status, renewal of a Section 22 or 41 asylum permit, and renewal of a Section 24 permit (refugee status). We also asked respondents to indicate who they specifically encountered the problem with. Moreover, if they did experience barriers we asked respondents to indicate who they

reported that barrier or problem to. Each respondent was allowed to provide up to three barriers or problems that they deemed to be the most important at each stage of the asylum process. For this reason, the analysis within this particular section focuses on the number of responses obtained to these questions, rather than actual respondents.

Respondents were by far significantly more likely to experience barriers at the Braamfontein Refugee Reception Office than at the Pretoria one. About half of the sample experienced barriers in submitting their application for refugee status. The main barriers identified were being unable to access the Office, being required to pay a bribe and quotas per country or per day of who is allowed into the Office. The majority of these barriers were experienced with officials from the Department; however, in the majority of cases, these barriers went unreported.

Less than one third (31%) of respondents experienced barriers in renewing their asylum permits. Bribery, non-functioning computers and lack of access figured prominently amongst the main barriers experienced. In the majority of these cases, barriers were not reported to anyone.

Over half of the respondents who had renewed their refugee permits indicated that they had not experienced any barriers. Almost one third (30%) of those who did experience barriers, pointed to being required to pay a bribe as the main barrier mostly by officials and interpreters. However, in most cases barriers were not reported.

Lastly, we asked respondents specifically whether they had ever been asked to pay for a series of steps in the asylum procedure, as well as about the effects of not having a proper identity document.

Over a quarter of respondents were asked to pay for submission of an application; 11% for renewal of asylum permits, while 21% indicated that they were asked to pay for translation services. At the different stages, it was often interpreters, and DHA officials to a lesser extent, who asked for these payments. More than half of the respondents (55%) are currently paying in excess of R100 simply to submit an application. On average, we found that interpreters received R367 per application that was submitted. Compared to submitting an application, respondents are being asked to pay lesser amounts for the renewal of asylum permits, namely up to R100; however, this practice happens more often, usually on a monthly or 3-month basis. For translation services, over two thirds of respondents who were asked to pay, paid in excess of R100.

Contrary to commonly held beliefs, the overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that they had never had their documents destroyed or removed by government authorities. However, almost all respondents indicated that the lack of proper documentation has negative effects on their lives in South Africa. In particular, the lack of a proper identity document makes it difficult for respondents to access

employment as well as basic social services such as education, housing, and health care.

LENGTH OF TIME TO OBTAIN REFUGEE STATUS

Considering the limiting conditions of work and study imposed by the Refugee Act of 1998, it is important to divide this part of the analysis between respondents who applied prior to 1st April 2000 – the date when the Refugee Act of 1998 came into force -- and those who applied on or after that date. It is important to note that more than half of our sample (58%) lodged their application for refugee status on or after April 2000. The remaining 42% of the sample applied for refugee status between 1990 and March 2000.

RESPONDENTS WHO APPLIED FOR REFUGEE STATUS BEFORE APRIL 2000

Taking into account respondents who applied before April 2000 and excluding those who indicated that they had lodged appeals with the Department of Home Affairs, the table below shows the periods of time that these respondents have had to wait to be granted refugee status from the date of application.

	N	%
Still waiting for decision	59	27
6 months or less	32	15
7 months to 1 year	19	9
13 months to 2 years	50	23
25 months to 3 years	32	15
More than 3 years	26	12
Total	**218**	**100**

Table 51: Length of refugee determination (from date of application to granting of status)

Half of these respondents waited for more than a year before they were granted refugee status. Despite the fact that the Department of Home Affairs made a serious attempt to clear the backlog of applications that fell under the Aliens Control Act of 1991, we found that over one quarter (27%) of the respondents who applied before April 2000 are currently still waiting for their status to be determined by the Department.

Focusing on respondents who indicated that they are still waiting for their applications to be determined, the table below provides a breakdown of the length of time that these respondents have been waiting.

	N	%
>2 years up to 3 years	15	25
>3 years up to 4 years	13	22
More than 4 years	31	53
Total	**59**	**100**

Table 52: Length of waiting time for applicants before April 2000

Over half of the respondents who indicated that they are still waiting for their status to be determined have been waiting for more than four years. It is beyond belief that someone might be asked to wait for more than four years for their application to be finalised. The only positive aspect of the situation of these respondents is that, unlike their counterparts who came on or after April 2000, they were generally granted permission to work and study while awaiting a decision.

RESPONDENTS WHO APPLIED FOR REFUGEE STATUS ON OR AFTER APRIL 2000

Taking into account respondents who applied on or after April 2000 and excluding those who indicated that they had lodged appeals with the Department of Home Affairs, the table below shows the periods of time that these respondents have had to wait to be granted refugee status from the date of application.

	N	%
Still waiting for decision	171	54
6 months or less	124	39
7 months to 1 year	16	5
13 months to 2 years	4	1
Total	**315**	**100**

Table 53: Length of refugee determination (from date of application to granting of status)

Over one third of respondents (39%) indicated that they waited six months or less to obtain a decision from the Department on their refugee status. The granting of status within this period conforms to Regulation 3(1) of the Refugee Act of 1998 which states the following:

> *"Applications for asylum will generally be adjudicated by the Department of Home Affairs within 180 days of filing a completed asylum application with a Refugee Reception Officer".*

However, 6% of the respondents waited for a period greater than six months and extending up to two years. In addition, over half of the respondents (54%) who applied on or after April 2000 indicated that they were still awaiting a decision on their refugee applications.

	N	%
6 months or less	45	26
7 months to 1 year	39	23
>1 year up to 2 years	68	40
>2 years up to 3 years	18	11
Total	**170**	**100**

Table 54: Breakdown of waiting time for respondents still awaiting a decision

One quarter of respondents who indicated that they are still awaiting a decision on their status only waited for 6 months or less – this falls within the regulations indicated above. However, the majority of respondents who applied on or after April 2000 and who indicated that the Department of Home Affairs has not made a decision on their applications, have waited for a period longer than the stipulated 6 months. The largest proportion of respondents (40%) has been waiting for one up to two years for the Department to finalise their application.

The fact that asylum seekers who have not had their refugee status determined are waiting for up to 3 years is particularly of concern given that, as will be demonstrated below, a large number of respondents in our sample did not know that they can petition for the work and study prohibition to be lifted.

WORK AND STUDY PROHIBITION

One important regulation which impacts directly on the ability of asylum seekers and refugees to sustain themselves financially is their inability, according to the Refugee Act of 1998, to work or study during the first six months after submitting their application for refugee status[9]. The period of 180 days is the time prescribed by the Act for the Department of Home Affairs to adjudicate applications for asylum. However, based on Clause 3(3) to the Regulations to the South African Refugee Act (No. R366), applicants are allowed to challenge this prohibition if the period of six months expires without the Department making a decision on an application. As stated in Clause 3(3) of the regulations:

> *"If the Department fails to adjudicate a case within 180 days, excepting delays caused by the applicant without just cause, the applicant will be permitted to apply to the Standing Committee for work or study authorisation or relief from other conditions that may have been imposed by the Standing Committee".*

Considering that this regulation exists and that the Department of Home Affairs often takes longer than the stipulated six months to decide on submitted applications, we sought to find out whether people were aware of this regulation and whether they had taken steps for it to be enforced. Since the Refugee Act and its regulations, including

[9] This regulation was successfully challenged with regards to the right of children to study. At present, only children are allowed to study. As this report is being written, a case was just finalised in Cape Town that successfully challenged the constitutionality of the work and study prohibition for asylum seekers. Before it is implemented, possible appeals by DHA will have to be awaited.

the prohibition on work and study, came into force on April 1st 2000, we asked respondents whether they had submitted their applications for refugee status before or after this date. If respondents submitted applications prior to this date they would not have been subject to this prohibition.

As indicated earlier, 58% of our sample (339 respondents) submitted their application for refugee status on or after April 1st 2000. We asked these respondents whether six months had expired since they submitted their applications.

	N	%
Yes	179	53
No	159	47
Total	**338**	**100**

Table 55: Have six months expired since you applied for refugee status without DHA making a decision on your application?

Slightly over half (53%) of the respondents who submitted their applications for refugee status on or after April 1st 2000 indicated that six months had expired since they had submitted their applications. We asked these respondents whether they knew that they could apply to have the work and study prohibition lifted if six months have expired without DHA having made a decision on their applications.

	N	%
Yes	60	34
No	118	66
Total	**178**	**100**

Table 56: Do you know that you can apply to have the work and study prohibition lifted?

As the table indicates, only one third of respondents were aware that they have the right to petition for the prohibition to be lifted. Respondents who had knowledge of the ability to petition for the prohibition to be lifted were most likely to have completed tertiary education or higher. There were no significant differences on knowledge of this regulation based on the sex of the respondent.

Finally, we asked respondents who were aware that the right of petition existed (60 respondents) whether they had actually applied for the prohibition to be lifted. We found that over half of these respondents applied (34 respondents) but most of them (32 respondents) did not succeed in having the prohibition lifted.

BARRIERS LINKED TO SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION FOR REFUGEE STATUS

Almost half of the responses (49%) obtained in answer to this question indicate that respondents experienced different barriers or problems in submitting their application for refugee status. The table below provides a breakdown of the barriers experienced.

	# of responses	%
Couldn't have access to the Refugee Reception Office	87	26
Being required to pay/bribe someone	82	24
Quotas per country or per day of how many people are allowed	65	19
Other	34	10
Lack of an interpreter/language problems	28	8
The computers were down/not working	25	7
I didn't have documents from my home country	17	5
Total	**338**	**100**

Table 57: If you have experienced any barriers to access in submitting your application for refugee status, what were they?

Focusing on respondents who indicated that they had experienced barriers to access, slightly over one quarter of responses pointed to lacking access to the Refugee Reception Office. In addition, almost another quarter of responses identified being required to pay or bribe someone as a second main barrier. Lastly, almost a fifth of responses show that a third main barrier was represented by established quotas per country or per day of how many people are allowed in.

When analysed by city, the findings seem to support the commonly held belief that asylum seekers and refugees receive better treatment at the Refugee Reception Office in Pretoria than they do if they have to rely on the Braamfontein office. From the responses obtained, it became apparent that respondents who report to the Refugee Reception Office in Pretoria were by far significantly less likely to have experienced any barriers to access in submitting their applications. In particular, the majority of respondents (74%) interviewed in Pretoria, who mostly rely on the Pretoria Refugee Reception Office, indicated that they did not experience barriers to access in submitting their applications. In contrast, only one third of respondents in Johannesburg indicated that they had experienced no barriers at this stage of the asylum procedure.

	Johannesburg	Pretoria	Total
I haven't experienced any barriers to access	33%	74%	51%
Couldn't have access to the Reception Office	19%	5%	13%
Quotas per country or per day	10%	9%	9%
Lack of an interpreter/language problems	5%	3%	4%
Being required to pay/bribe someone	20%	2%	12%
Didn't have documents from home country	4%	1%	3%
The computers were down/not working	6%	0%	4%
Other	4%	7%	5%
Total	**100% (N=389)**	**100% (N=300)**	**100% (N=689)**

Table 58: If you have experienced any barriers to access in submitting your application for refugee status, what were they?, by city where respondent was interviewed

Respondents who rely on the Braamfontein Refugee Reception Office in Johannesburg were the most likely to state that they are required to pay or bribe someone, that they are unable to access the Refugee Reception Office and the most likely to be told that the computers at the office are not working when they try to submit their applications.

If we analyse the most frequently mentioned responses in relation to respondents' country of origin, we find that Angolans and Rwandans were amongst the least likely to have experienced any barriers. This might be due to the fact that it is accepted by the Department of Home Affairs that Angola and Rwanda are two war-torn countries which are "refugee producing".

	Haven't experienced any barriers	Couldn't have access to the Refugee Office	Quotas per country or per day	Being required to pay/bribe someone	Total
Angola	76%	7%	10%	7%	100% (N=111)
Burundi	46%	18%	22%	15%	100% (N=55)
Congo-Brazza	72%	6%	6%	16%	100% (N=32)
DRC	62%	19%	10%	10%	100% (N=135)
Ethiopia	43%	15%	21%	21%	100% (N=47)
Rwanda	81%	10%	0%	10%	100% (N=31)
Somalia	47%	21%	10%	23%	100% (N=146)
Total	**59%**	**15%**	**11%**	**15%**	**100% (N=557)**

Table 59: Barriers to access in submitting refugee application by country of origin

Respondents from Burundi and Ethiopia were the most likely to state that the main barrier they experienced were quotas per country or per day, while Somali respondents were the most likely to experience being required to pay or bribe someone.

Once the barriers were identified, we asked respondents to specify who they experienced the barriers with.

	Officials from DHA	Security guards	Interpreters	Total
Couldn't have access to the Reception Office	45%	54%	1%	100% (N=84)
Quotas per country or per day	94%	5%	2%	100% (N=65)
Lack of an interpreter/language problems	30%	0%	70%	100% (N=27)
Being required to pay/bribe someone	23%	3%	74%	100% (N=78)
I didn't have documents from my home country	94%	0%	6%	100% (N=17)
The computers were down/not working	96%	4%	0%	100% (N=25)
Total	**56%**	**17%**	**27%**	**100% (N=296)**

Table 60: Who specifically did you encounter this barrier with?

The majority of the barriers (56%) were experienced with officials from the Department. More specifically, barriers such as quotas per country or per day, not having documents from the country of origin and the computers not working were most likely to have been encountered with officials from the Department of Home Affairs. Not having access to the Refugee Reception Office was a barrier mainly experienced with security guards. Lastly, being asked to pay bribes was significantly more likely to be a barrier experienced with interpreters. This last finding is not surprising given the fact that asylum seekers have the right to, and often require, the services of an interpreter while the Department of Home Affairs does not pay interpreters a salary. Consequently, enlisting the services of an interpreter often means paying a substantial amount of money that goes, untaxed, into the pockets of interpreters who linger around the Reception Offices.

One necessary element in being able to address the above barriers is the need for asylum seekers to report these problems to authorities. If these barriers were reported, there could be sufficient evidence to take to the Department of Home Affairs and encourage them to address the situation. For this reason, we asked respondents to specify who, if anyone, they had reported the barriers to.

	# of responses	%
Nobody	209	62
NGOs working with refugees	71	21
Friends or relatives	20	6
Other	19	6
Officials from DHA	16	5
Total	**335**	**100**

Table 61: Who did you report the barrier or problem to?

As the table above shows, in the majority of cases (62%), respondents who experienced a barrier or problem did not report it to anyone. This was particularly the case in reporting cases of bribery. Very few respondents indicated that they had approached Home Affairs directly with their problems. This is likely to be linked to the low expectations that respondents have about Home Affairs staff. About one fifth of the respondents (21%) indicated that they had approached NGOs working with refugees for assistance.

	NGOs working with refugees	Nobody	Total
Angola	8%	92%	100% (N=78)
Burundi	84%	16%	100% (N=37)
Congo-Brazza	9%	91%	100% (N=23)
DRC	19%	81%	100% (N=69)
Ethiopia	24%	76%	100% (N=33)
Rwanda	14%	86%	100% (N=29)
Somalia	10%	90%	100% (N=115)
Other countries	0%	100%	100% (N=15)
Total	**19%**	**81%**	**100% (N=399)**

Table 62: Main entities problems were reported to by country of origin

Burundian respondents were the most likely to report the problems they encountered in submitting their applications to NGOs working with refugees, while Somalis were the least likely to report the barriers encountered. This seems to support the previous findings that Somalis often experience problems with bribery and br ibery cases are the least likely to be reported to anyone.

BARRIERS LINKED TO RENEWAL OF SECTION 22 AND SECTION 41 ASYLUM PERMITS

After asking respondents whether they had encountered barriers in submitting their application for refugee status, we asked respondents the same questions again, but this time in relation to the renewal of their Section 41 or 22 asylum permits. Compared to submitting their applications, respondents were less likely to experience barriers renewing their asylum permits.

We found that 31% of respondents experienced barriers at this stage of the asylum process; the table below shows the kinds of barriers that they experienced.

	N	%
Being required to pay/bribe someone	41	22
The computers were down/not working	37	20
Couldn't have access to the Refugee Reception Office	34	18
Process too long & have to come every week or month	23	12
Quotas per country or per day of how many people are allowed	17	9
Other	14	8
Lack of an interpreter/language problems	9	5
Shortage of staff	7	4
No interview up to date	5	3
Total	**187**	**100**

Table 63: If you have experienced any barriers to access in renewing your Sec.22/41 permit, what were they?

Bribery, non-functioning computers and lack of access figured prominently amongst the main barriers experienced. In addition 12% of respondents indicated that their

main problem is the length of time that it takes to renew a permit and the fact that the renewal often only lasts for a week or a month. In turn, this constant need for permit renewal does not assist the Department of Home Affairs, which often complains of a shortage of staff. Unfortunately, cell sizes are too small to conduct analysis by country of origin.

Even though the table presented below is not statistically significant because some cell sizes are too small, it is nonetheless indicative of who asylum seekers are experiencing barriers with.

	Officials from DHA	**Security guards**	**Translators/ interpreters**	**Total**
Couldn't have access to the Reception Office	16%	78%	6%	100% (N=32)
Quotas per country or per day	100%	0%	0%	100% (N=16)
Being required to pay/bribe someone	46%	0%	54%	100% (N=41)
The computers were down/not working	97%	3%	0%	100% (N=36)
Other	86%	0%	14%	100% (N=29)
Process too long & have to come every week or month	95%	5%	0%	100% (N=21)
Total	**69%**	**15%**	**16%**	**100% (N=175)**

Table 64: Who specifically did you encounter this barrier with?

As in the case of respondents' trying to submit their refugee applications, respondents who had experienced barriers indicated that they mostly experienced these barriers with officials from the Department (69%). In particular, respondents were likely to experience lack of access due to quotas per country or per day of who is allowed in, the problem of computers not working and the renewal process being too long directly with officials from the Department. Not having access to the Refugee Reception Office was predominantly pinned on security guards while an important barrier such as being required to pay a bribe was more likely to be experienced with translators or interpreters.

	N	**%**
Nobody	139	76
NGOs working with refugees	17	9
Friends/relatives or church/mosque	13	7
Officials from DHA	9	5
Other	6	3
Total	**184**	**100**

Table 65: Who did you report this problem or barrier to?

As can be observed, three quarters of respondents who experienced barriers during the renewal of their asylum seeker permits, never reported any barriers that they had encountered. Once again, very few reports were made directly to the authorities involved. Instead, respondents relayed the problem to non-governmental entities such as NGOs and churches, as well as friends or relatives.

BARRIERS LINKED TO RENEWAL OF SECTION 24 REFUGEE PERMITS

The last stage that we focused on was respondents' experience in renewing their Section 24 refugee status permits. We found that this question did not apply in 79% of cases because respondents had not yet reached the stage of having to renew their refugee permits. These are granted for a period of two years and it is likely that respondents will experience this stage in coming years.

Taking into account only responses where this question applied (123 responses), we found that 54% of them indicated that they had experienced no barriers to access. Those who experienced barriers during this stage of the process confronted the following types of barriers.

	N	%
Being required to pay/bribe someone	17	30
Other	14	25
Couldn't have access to the Reception Office	7	12
The computers were down/not working	7	12
Given Sec.22 or 41 permits	7	12
Shortage of staff/Lack of sufficient personnel	5	9
Total	**57**	**100**

Table 66: If you have experienced any barriers to access in renewing your refugee status, what were they?

Almost one third of the respondents indicated that the main barrier experienced was, once again, being required to pay or bribe someone to renew their documents. In most cases, respondents indicated that they encountered this barrier with officials from the Department and interpreters. In 75% of the cases, respondents did not report their problems to anyone.

There were no significant differences regarding the different barriers to access based on the sex of the respondent.

REQUESTS FOR PAYMENT DURING DIFFERENT STAGES OF THE ASYLUM PROCEDURE

In addition to asking respondents broadly about the kinds of barriers that they have experienced as part of the asylum determination process, we also asked respondents specifically about whether they had ever been asked to pay for submitting an application for refugee status, renewing their asylum seeker permits, renewing their refugee permits and translation services. If they were asked to pay, we inquired further as to whether they actually paid, who requested these payments, and how much they actually paid, if respondents consented to it.

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION FOR REFUGEE STATUS

	N	%
Yes	151	26
No	435	74
Total	**586**	**100**

Table 67: Have you ever been asked to pay for submitting your application for refugee status?

While the majority of respondents were never asked to pay to submit their applications for refugee status, it is of concern that slightly over a quarter of respondents are being asked to pay for this step which, according to the Refugee Act, is meant to be a free one in the asylum process.

	Johannesburg	Pretoria	Total
Yes	46%	5%	26%
No	54%	95%	74%
Total	**100% (N=297)**	**100% (N=289)**	**100% (N=586)**

Table 68: Have you ever been asked to pay for submitting an application for refugee status?, by city

Echoing previous findings, respondents interviewed in Johannesburg were significantly more likely to be asked to pay than respondents in Pretoria. Only 5% of respondents in Pretoria were asked to pay compared to 46% in Johannesburg.

	Yes	No	Total
Angola	15%	85%	100% (N=123)
Burundi	31%	69%	100% (N=49)
Congo-Brazza	41%	59%	100% (N=39)
DRC	30%	70%	100% (N=143)
Ethiopia	31%	69%	100% (N=35)
Rwanda	11%	89%	100% (N=35)
Somalia	30%	70%	100% (N=130)
Other countries	13%	88%	100% (N32)
Total	**26%**	**74%**	**100% (N=586)**

Table 69: Have you ever been asked to pay for submitting your application for refugee status?, by country of origin

When analysed by respondents' country of origin, respondents from Congo Brazzaville were significantly more likely to be asked to pay than respondents from other countries. Angolans and Rwandans were the least likely to be asked to pay for submitting an application.

	N	%
Interpreters	111	75
DHA officials	26	17
Broker or agent	8	5
Security guards	4	3
Total	**149**	**100**

Table 70: Who asked you to pay?

Not surprisingly, three quarters of those who asked for money in our sample were interpreters. On average, interpreters received R367 per application that was submitted. In addition to interpreters, in 17% of the cases the main culprits were DHA officials. It is important to keep in mind that often interpreters act as conduits for money to change hands between asylum seekers and refugees on one hand, and officials from the Department on the other. For this reason, the proportion of officials from DHA who might be receiving payments is likely to be higher than what is reported above.

	N	%
Nothing	24	16
Up to R100	19	13
R 100	27	18
R101-R250	28	19
R251-R500	31	21
R501-R1500	22	15
Total	**151**	**100**

Table 71: If you were asked to pay, how much did you pay?

The largest proportion of respondents (21%) paid between R250 and R500. However, if one combines results, it can be observed that more than half of the respondents (55%) are currently paying in excess of R100 simply to submit an application. The majority of respondents from Congo Brazzaville who paid for this process paid between R100 and R500.

Country of origin	Median amount paid in submitting application
DRC	R540
Other countries	R400
Angola	R300
Ethiopia	R175
Congo-Brazzaville	R100
Somalia	R100
Burundi	R75
Rwanda	R45

As the table above shows, respondents from DRC and those from the grouping of other countries were likely to pay higher amounts than respondents from Burundi or Rwanda.

RENEWAL OF ASYLUM SEEKER PERMITS

Respondents were asked if they had ever been asked to pay to renew their asylum seeker permits. The overwhelming majority (89%) were never asked to pay for renewing their permits. Respondents who indicated that they had been asked to pay (11%) were significantly more likely to have been Somalis interviewed in Johannesburg.

	N	%
Nothing	11	17
Up to R50	19	30
R51-R100	23	36
More than R100	11	17
Total	**64**	**100**

Table 72: If you were asked to pay, how much did you pay to renew your asylum seeker permit?

Compared to submitting an application, respondents are being asked to pay lesser amounts, namely up to R100. One third of the respondents who were asked to pay actually paid between R50 and R100, while 30% of respondents paid up to R50 to renew their permits. While the amounts may be lower, this is of concern, particularly if one takes into account that asylum seekers are expected to renew their permits regularly, either every month or every three months in most cases. If respondents are paying on a regular basis, this represents a fairly sustainable business for the Department of Home Affairs.

Cell sizes were too small to analyse payment by country of origin. However, if we calculate the median for the amounts paid by country of origin, we find the following.

Country of origin	Median amount paid for renewal of status
Angola	R150
Ethiopia	R125
Somalia	R100
DRC	R50
Other countries	R50

Respondents from Congo Brazzaville and Rwanda in our sample did not pay for the renewal of their permits and therefore are not included in the table above. However, respondents from Angola and Ethiopia were more likely to have paid in excess of R100 for renewing their permits.

	N	%
Broker or agent	2	4
DHA officials	18	35
Interpreters	32	62
Total	**52**	**100**

Table 73: Who asked you to pay (to renew your asylum seeker permit)?

As the above table shows, in 62% of the cases respondents paid their money to interpreters, while in 35% of the cases they paid DHA officials. Once again, it is important to keep in mind that there is a great deal of overlap between interpreters and DHA officials in money transactions.

TRANSLATION SERVICES FOR INTERVIEW

A slightly larger proportion of respondents were asked to pay for translation services than for renewing their permits.

	N	%
Yes	121	21
No	410	70
Not applicable	59	10
Total	**590**	**100**

Table 74: Have you ever been asked to pay for translation/interpretation services?

One fifth of respondents indicated that they had been asked to pay to receive interpretation services for their interviews. Respondents from DRC were the most likely to have been asked to pay for translation services, while Rwandan respondents were the least likely. As a follow up, we asked those who had been asked to pay how much they had actually paid for translation/interpretation services.

	N	%
Nothing	14	12
Less than R100	24	20
R 100	38	31
R101-R200	30	25
More than R200	15	12
Total	**121**	**100**

Table 75: How much did you pay for translation/interpretation services?

The largest proportion of respondents (31%) indicated that they paid R100 for these services. However, if we analyse results jointly, it can be observed that over two thirds of respondents are paying R100 or more. In particular, the majority of DRC respondents who were asked to pay paid between R100 and R200 for these services.

There were no significant differences in requesting payments based on the sex of the respondents.

INTERACTION WITH GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES

In addition to asking respondents specifically about their experiences with the Department of Home Affairs, we asked them whether they had ever had their documents destroyed or removed by any government authorities.

	N	%
Yes	53	9
No	536	91
Total	**589**	**100**

Table 76: Have your documents ever been removed or destroyed by government authorities?

Contrary to commonly held beliefs that government authorities are actively engaged in destroying or removing documents, the overwhelming majority of respondents (91%) indicated that they had never experienced this problem. While removal or destruction of documents happens in 9% of the cases, this practice does not seem to be as often or as widespread as commonly believed. There were no significant differences based on respondent's country of origin or by city where respondents were interviewed.

If analysed based on the sex of the respondent, male respondents were more likely than women to state that they had experienced this problem. We asked those who had experienced this problem to specify who had undertaken this action.

	Yes	
	N	%
SAPS/Police removed/destroyed documents	34	64%
Home Affairs officials removed/destroyed documents	13	25%
Other government authority removed/destroyed documents	4	8%
SANDF removed/destroyed documents	3	6%
Immigration officials removed/destroyed documents	2	4%
Security guards removed/destroyed documents	1	2%

Table 77: Who removed/destroyed your documents?

The majority of respondents who had their documents removed or destroyed pointed to the police as the main agent involved in this action.

Coupled to asking respondents whether they had ever had the experience of having their documents removed or destroyed, we asked respondents whether they had ever been arrested for working without a proper permit. Interestingly, only 10% of our sample indicated that this had been the case. While it could be possible that this practice is less common than expected, it is also important to keep in mind that respondents might not be forthcoming in admitting arrest.

EFFECTS DUE TO THE ABSENCE OF HAVING AN IDENTITY DOCUMENT

Asylum seeker and refugee permits often take the form of pieces of paper from the Department of Home Affairs that have a series of stamps on them. Despite their representing an official form of documentation issued by the South African government, many South Africans are suspicious of these documents and often assume that they do not constitute a legal form of identification. For this reason, we

asked respondents whether the absence of a proper identity document had negative effects on their lives in South Africa.

	N	%
Yes	568	96
No	22	4
Total	**590**	**100**

Table 78: In your view, does the absence of an identity document have negative effects on your life in South Africa?

The overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that not having an identity document had negative effects on their lives. There were no significant differences based on respondent's country of origin, area where respondents were interviewed or current status.

We asked respondents who argued that not having an identity document has negative effects on their lives to specify these effects.

	Yes	
	N	%
Difficult to get employment	523	92%
Difficult to get a bank account	378	67%
Difficult to access education	350	62%
Difficult to access shelter/housing	196	35%
Difficult to access credit/loans	188	33%
Difficult to access government social grants	144	25%
Difficult to access health care services	139	24%
Can get arrested	76	13%
Difficult to travel	36	6%
Other	30	5%

Table 79: Negative effects due to absence of identity document[10]

From the responses given, it can be observed that the lack of a proper identity document makes it difficult for respondents to access employment as well as basic social services such as education, housing, and health care. Neither does this facilitate the access to financial services such as obtaining a bank account, accessing credit or social grants from the government.

Asylum seekers in our sample were significantly more likely to argue that the lack of a proper document makes it difficult to access employment.

[10] Percentages do not add up to 100% because respondents were allowed to give more than one answer to this question.

CURRENT LIVING CONDITIONS

This section groups together a series of questions that we asked respondents about their current living conditions in South Africa. The first part focuses on respondents' difficulties in accessing employment as well as their knowledge of where to go if problems with employers arise. It highlights that the lack of proper documentation, whether in the form of a lack of ID or not having permission to work, in addition to not being South African figured prominently as the main barriers that respondents have faced in securing employment. Since refugees have permission to work, it is not surprising that asylum seekers were the most likely to point to the lack of permission to work as a difficulty. Over a quarter of respondents (28%) who have some form of employment, but particularly those who are engaged in skilled occupations, indicated that they have an employer. However, 71% of them did not know where to go for assistance if problems with their employers arise.

The second part explores respondents' current places of residence, as well as their knowledge of where to go if problems with landlords arise. It shows that the majority of the respondents in our sample stay in places for which they pay rent. Almost two fifths of respondents rent a room in a house or flat, 31% rent a room in a house or flat which they share with other individuals, while 17% rent a whole house or flat. Usually, the larger the household, the greater the chance that household members would be staying in bigger places. Those who share a room in a flat or house generally pay R250 in rent per month, whereas those who rent a room in a house or flat are more likely to pay between R250 and R750 per month. On average, respondents stay in places that have 3 rooms, excluding kitchen and bathroom, which they share with 6 people.

We found that almost two fifths of respondents currently do not know where to go for assistance with accommodation. Those who knew were more likely to resort to entities that bypass the government -- such as friends, churches/mosques, UNHCR or relatives for assistance -- rather than the government itself. Similarly, we found that the large majority of respondents who rented a place did not know where to go for assistance if problems with landlords arise.

The third part focuses on respondents' experiences in accessing food, as well as services such as healthcare and primary and secondary education for children. With regards to access to food, this part of the report shows that on average, all respondents have access to some food. In particular, over two fifths of them have two meals a day. It is of concern, however, that 39% of our sample are only able to manage one meal per day. Households that have no income were the most likely to indicate that they have one meal per day, whereas households earning more than R2000 per month were significantly more likely to have three meals a day. Despite these findings, 78% of respondents indicated that there are days when there is no food for them or their

family unit to eat. This could indicate that income and subsequent access to food might be erratic rather than constant.

Only over one quarter of all respondents (28%), but more women than men in our sample, are currently receiving food assistance, mostly on a monthly basis. Almost half of the respondents who are receiving food assistance obtain it from churches or mosques, while a third also indicated that they are receiving food from SACC at Khotso House in Johannesburg.

Focusing on healthcare, the report shows that almost half of the respondents most often go to public hospitals for emergency care for which they pay, on average, R37. Worryingly, 13% of respondents who tried to access emergency medical care were refused emergency medical care mainly by hospital administrative personnel. Two important reasons cited for refusal were the hospital not accepting documents and being unable to pay for emergency health care. The largest proportion of respondents (41%) who were refused emergency care sought, as an alternative, to try another health facility.

As to reproductive health care or family planning, the majority of our sample (80%), but predominantly male respondents, indicated that they do not use these services. Those who do either go to public hospitals (11%) or public clinics (8%). For primary health care, two fifths of respondents go to public hospitals, while 28% rely on local public clinics. Unlike in the case with emergency care, 92% of the respondents indicated that they had never been refused care.

Respondents either do not pay for healthcare services (37%), rely on their own wages or income to pay (33%), or rely on refugee friends to help (17%).

In terms of primary school education, this section of the report shows that 17% of respondents in our sample had children or dependents with them of primary school going age. Of these respondents, 30% are not sending their children to school mostly because they don't have the money to afford the school fees. In addition, one third of respondents (32%) who have primary school going age children indicated that their children had been refused admission because parents can't afford to pay for school fees, because the school is full, or alternatively because schools do not accept asylum seeker and refugee permits.

With respect to secondary school education, the study shows that only 8% of the sample (47 respondents) had children or dependents of secondary school going age. About half of these respondents' children are not attending school; in most cases this is because parents cannot afford to pay for fees.

Lastly, we highlight what respondents identified as being the main basic needs that they require assistance with. The three most mentioned priorities were: Documentation (53%), employment opportunities (50%), and housing and shelter (42%). Access to documentation is directly linked to the ability to find employment

and have a source of income that ensures the survival of respondents and their family units.

ACCESSING EMPLOYMENT

We asked all respondents about the kinds of difficulties that they have experienced in getting a job.

	Yes	
	# of responses	**%**
Having only short-term permit, no ID	463	78%
Not being South African	299	51%
Not having permission to work	212	36%
Language barriers	138	23%
Other reasons	28	5%
I have faced no problems getting work	25	4%
I lack qualifications	22	4%
I haven't tried to look for a job	10	2%
Jobs are full/no vacancies	10	2%
Police harassment	5	1%

Table 80: What kind of difficulties, if any, have you faced in getting a job?[11]

The lack of proper documentation, whether in the form of a lack of ID or not having permission to work, figured prominently as the main issue interfering with respondents' ability to acquire a job. In addition, half of the respondents also mentioned that not being South African has made it difficult for them to get employment.

Somali asylum seekers were significantly more likely to argue that not having a proper identity document but having instead a short-term permit makes it difficult to acquire a job. In contrast, refugees from Angola and DRC were the most likely to argue that not being South African presents the main difficulty in getting a job.

Since refugees have permission to work, it is not surprising that asylum seekers were the most likely to point to the lack of permission to work as a difficulty. In particular, asylum seekers from Angola, Burundi, DRC and Somalia were the most likely to state that not having permission to work is amongst the main difficulties that they face in getting a job.

SEEKING ASSISTANCE IF PROBLEMS WITH EMPLOYERS ARISE

As we stated previously, 30% of respondents in our sample are currently unemployed, while 6% are students. The remaining respondents are engaged in some form of

[11] Percentages do not add up to 100% because respondents were allowed to give more than one answer to this question.

employment and almost one quarter of them (28% or 107 respondents) have an employer.

	Yes	No	Total
Skilled occupations	74%	26%	100% (N=27)
Semi-skilled occupations	26%	74%	100% (N=100)
Unskilled occupations	24%	76%	100% (N=250)
Total	**28%**	**72%**	**100% (N=377)**

Table 81: Do you have an employer?, by current occupation

Not surprisingly, respondents engaged in skilled occupations were significantly more likely to have an employer. There were no significant differences between asylum seekers and refugees in the sample or between male and female respondents.

We asked respondents who have an employer whether they know where they can go if they have a problem with their employer. The majority of respondents (71%) who have an employer indicated that they would not know where to go. The type of current occupation that respondents hold did not influence this finding. This might suggest that respondents who have an employer do not work in places that have spelled out grievance procedures if a problem arises or are unaware of important pieces of labour legislation such as the Labour Relations Act and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act.

We asked the 31 respondents who indicated that they knew where to go to specify exactly where they would get assistance. Half of these respondents, mainly teachers, security guards and administrative assistants, would approach a lawyer for assistance. In addition, 8 respondents, mainly teachers and shop assistants, indicated that they would approach the police, while 7 also mentioned that they would approach government departments for assistance. That some respondents would approach the police indicates that they are not aware of existing mechanisms or institutions in place to address labour-related matters.

SHELTER AND HOUSING

CURRENT PLACE OF STAY

The last section on shelter and housing contained in our questionnaire focused on where respondents are living at the moment, whether they pay rent, the number of people that they live with and the facilities that they need to share.

The majority of the respondents in our sample stay in places for which they pay rent. Only 9% of the sample indicated that they do not pay rent, either because respondents live with relatives or friends, stay in churches or have occupied empty buildings.

	N	%
Rent a room(s) in a house or flat or back room	231	39
Rent but share a room(s) in a house or flat	185	31
Rent a house or flat	99	17
No rent – stay with friends/relatives/church/empty bldg	50	9
Other	25	4
Total	**590**	**100**

Table 82: Where are you staying at the moment?

Almost two fifths of respondents indicated that they rent a room in a house or flat, or alternatively rent a back room or cottage. Slightly less than a third of the sample rent a room in a house or flat but they share that one room with other individuals.

	One person	Two people	Three people	Four people or more	Total
Rent a room(s) in a house or flat or back room	28%	19%	19%	34%	100% (N=231)
Share a room(s) in a house or flat	27%	12%	18%	43%	100% (N=185)
Rent a house or flat	9%	8%	20%	63%	100% (N=99)
Other	52%	8%	4%	36%	100% (N=25)
No rent - stay w/ friends relatives/church/empty bldg	36%	4%	10%	50%	100% (N=50)
Total	**26%**	**13%**	**18%**	**43%**	**100% (N=590)**

Table 83: Where are you staying at the moment?, by household size

Usually, the larger the household, the greater the chance that household members would be staying in bigger places. For instance, households made up of two people were more likely to rent a room in a house or flat, whereas households with four people or more were more likely to rent an entire house instead of only a room. Households made up of one person were the most likely to stay in other places such as a shelter, a guesthouse or hostel, or even own a shack in a few cases.

	Rent a room	Share a room	Rent a house or flat	No rent paid	Total
Angola	38%	22%	23%	17%	100% (N=115)
Burundi	27%	63%	2%	8%	100% (N=49)
Congo-Brazza	41%	10%	49%	0%	100% (N=39)
DRC	38%	29%	23%	10%	100% (N=138)
Ethiopia	57%	37%	0%	6%	100% (N=35)
Rwanda	49%	15%	21%	15%	100% (N=33)
Somalia	51%	38%	7%	4%	100% (N=124)
Other countries	19%	63%	19%	0%	100% (N=32)
Total	**41%**	**33%**	**18%**	**9%**	**100% (N=565)**

Table 84: Where are you staying at the moment?, by country of origin

Respondents from Ethiopia and Somalia were the most likely to rent a room in a house or flat. Respondents from Burundi and those from the grouped countries were significantly more likely to pay for sharing a room in a flat or house, while

respondents from Congo Brazzaville were the most likely to rent a house or flat. In contrast, Angolans were significantly more likely to pay no rent, as a result of staying with friends, family or in churches.

	Nothing	**Up to R250**	**R251-R500**	**R501-R750**	**More than R750**	**Total**
Rent a room(s) in a house or flat or back room	5%	15%	39%	31%	10%	100% (N=231)
Share a room(s) in a house or flat	13%	41%	31%	10%	5%	100% (N=185)
Rent a house or flat	10%	6%	11%	10%	63%	100% (N=99)
Other	56%	4%	24%	4%	12%	100% (N=25)
No rent - stay with friends/relatives/ church/empty bldg	98%	2%	0%	0%	0%	100% (N=50)
Total	**18%**	**20%**	**28%**	**17%**	**17%**	**100% (N=590)**

Table 85: Where do you stay at the moment?, by amount paid in rent each month

The largest proportion of respondents (28%) indicated that they pay between R250 and R500 each month for rent. Respondents who share a room in a flat or house were the most likely to pay up to R250 in rent per month, whereas those who rent a room in a house or flat were significantly more likely to pay between R250 and R750 per month. Respondents who indicated that they rent an entire flat or house were the most likely to pay more than R750 per month in rent.

DENSITY AND OVERCROWDING

On average, respondents stay in places that have 3 rooms, excluding kitchen and bathroom. They share these places with 6 people[12]. Each room is often shared with 2 to 3 people. This is unlikely to be very different from black South African households.

On average respondents had one kitchen and one toilet in the place where they stay. Kitchens are shared with six people, whereas respondents are most likely to share the toilet with 5 people[13]. It is not uncommon that households share spaces such as kitchens and bathrooms with the members of the household.

If we compare these figures to those of African households in Gauteng, we find that asylum seekers and refugees tend to have slightly greater access to a flush or chemical toilet. While we found that on average respondents had access to one toilet per

12 On average, respondents share with a total of 8 people. However, the median measurement of 6 people is more reliable in this instance due to the sample being skewed (i.e. few outlier cases that distort the average).

13 Median figures are being used due to the skewness of the sample.

household, only three quarters (75%) of African households in Gauteng do so[14]. The remaining African population only has access to a pit latrine (15%), a bucket latrine (4%) and a further 4% have no facilities whatsoever.

ASSISTANCE WITH ACCOMMODATION

We also asked respondents where they would go now if they needed help with accommodation. This was asked as a way to measure respondents' knowledge of available resources.

	Yes	
	# of responses	**%**
I do not/would not know where to go for assistance	233	39%
Friends	203	34%
Church/mosque	80	14%
UNHCR	71	12%
Relatives	62	11%
My refugee community	59	10%
NGOs working with asylum seekers/refugees	40	7%
Other place	19	3%
Organisations that are run by refugees	8	1%
Government institution/department	5	1%
My employer	4	1%

Table 86: Where would you go *now* if you need assistance with accommodation?[15]

It is of concern that almost two fifths of respondents currently do not know where to go for assistance with accommodation. Once again, this lack of knowledge could be a product of the lack of information or services that are offered to asylum seekers and refugees. In this vein, it should be noted that respondents are more likely to resort to entities that bypass the government -- such as friends, churches/mosques, UNHCR or relatives for assistance -- rather than the government itself. In particular, one third of respondents indicated that they would resort to friends if they required assistance, while 14% would rely on churches or mosques to help.

Moreover, these findings show that service providers dealing with these services are either invisible or not currently providing this kind of information to asylum seekers and refugees.

SEEKING ASSISTANCE ABOUT LANDLORD PROBLEMS

We asked respondents who indicated that they rent a place (515 respondents) whether they know where to go for assistance if they experience problems with their landlord.

[14] Data obtained from 1996 Census.
[15] The numbers do not add up to 100% because respondents were allowed to give more than one answer to this question.

	N	%
Yes	95	18
No	420	82
Total	**515**	**100**

Table 87: Do you know where to go for assistance if you have problems with your landlord?

The majority of respondents who rent a place (82%) did not know where to go for assistance. There were no significant differences based on the sex of the respondent.

Respondents from Burundi and Ethiopia were significantly less likely to know where to go, whereas Rwandans were the most likely to know where to go. This general lack of awareness points to the lack of basic information amongst refugees and asylum seekers of the avenues available to deal with landlord problems. This is not a matter that is discussed with refugees and asylum seekers. Neither is it a matter that asylum seekers and refugees are generally given any guidance on.

Interestingly, respondents interviewed in Pretoria were significantly more likely than those interviewed in Johannesburg to know where to go for assistance. This is further illustrated in the table below which shows the specific places where the remaining 18% of the respondents who knew where to go, would actually go.

	Yes	
	# of responses	**%**
Lawyers for Human Rights	33	33%
Police	31	31%
Department of Housing	8	8%
Other government institution/department	7	7%
Other place	5	5%
Friends	5	5%
Wits Law Clinic	4	4%
South African Human Rights Commission	3	3%
Relatives	3	3%
Church/mosque	3	3%
Rental agency	3	3%
Legal Resources Centre	2	2%
Organisations run by refugees	2	2%
Jesuit Refugee Services	2	2%
UNHCR	2	2%

Table 88: Where would you go for assistance if you have problems with your landlord? (N=100)

One third of the respondents who knew where to go for assistance indicated that they would go to the offices of Lawyers for Human Rights in Pretoria. This is not surprising since respondents in Pretoria were more knowledgeable of where to seek help with landlord problems.

Almost another third of respondents also indicated that they would approach the police for assistance. As can be observed, respondents also mentioned, albeit in small numbers, a series of other entities that they would approach. Cell sizes are too small to do any further analysis on this issue.

ACCESS TO FOOD

To get a sense of the well being of respondents, we asked a series of questions about their access to food. In particular, we asked about the number of meals that they or their family units have per day, whether there are days when there is no food, as well as whether they receive any food assistance.

	N	%
None	1	0
One meal per day	232	39
Two meals per day	259	44
Three meals per day	98	17
Total	**590**	**100**

Table 89: How many meals a day do you and your family unit have?

The largest proportion of respondents in our sample (44%) indicated that they usually have two meals a day. It is of concern, however, that two fifths of our sample are only able to manage one meal per day.

Household size did not have an effect on how many meals respondents indicated that they have per day. However, when analysed by income, households that have no income were the most likely to indicate that they have one meal per day, whereas households earning more than R2000 per month were significantly more likely to have three meals a day.

Despite the fact that the majority of our sample indicated that they consume between two and three meals each day, 78% of respondents indicated that there are days when there is no food for the respondent or their family unit to eat. Respondents from DRC and Angola were the most likely to indicate that this is the case. Considering that a large proportion of respondents are either unemployed or working in unskilled occupations, this finding could indicate that income and subsequent access to food is likely to be erratic rather than constant.

Not surprisingly, respondents who indicated that they manage to have only one meal a day were significantly more likely to state that there are days when there is no food to eat, while those who have three meals a day were the least likely.

	N	%
Seldom	42	9
Sometimes	330	72
Often	57	12
Very often	32	7
Total	**461**	**100**

Table 90: How often do you or your family unit go without food?

Of the respondents who indicated that there are days when there is no food to eat, almost three quarters of them indicated that this happens “sometimes”, while almost

one fifth indicated that often or very often there are days when there is a total lack of food in the day. Respondents who have one meal a day were the most likely to indicate that this happens often or very often.

We asked respondents if they are currently receiving any food assistance. Over one quarter of all respondents (28%) indicated that they are currently receiving this type of assistance.

	Yes	No	Total
Angola	40%	61%	100% (N=124)
Burundi	55%	45%	100% (N=49)
Congo-Brazza	28%	73%	100% (N=40)
DRC	28%	72%	100% (N=145)
Ethiopia	6%	94%	100% (N=35)
Rwanda	83%	17%	100% (N=35)
Somalia	3%	97%	100% (N=130)
Other countries	0%	100%	100% (N=32)
Total	**28%**	**72%**	**100% (N=590)**

Table 91: Are you or your family unit receiving assistance with food now?, by country of origin

Respondents from Rwanda, Burundi and Angola were the most likely to indicate that they and their families are receiving assistance with food at present. We also found that female respondents were significantly more likely than male respondents to be receiving food assistance at present.

In contrast, respondents from Ethiopia and Somalia were the least likely to state that they are currently receiving assistance.

We asked respondents who are receiving food assistance to specify where they are obtaining it.

	Yes	
	# of responses	%
Getting food assistance from Churches/mosques	78	49%
Getting food assistance from Khotso House (SACC)	52	33%
Getting food assistance from Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS)	24	15%
Getting food assistance from NGOs run by refugees	7	4%
Getting food assistance from Relatives	5	3%
Getting food assistance from Refugees of same nationality as me	3	2%
Getting food assistance from Other source	3	2%
Getting food assistance from Refugees of another nationality	1	1%

Table 92: Are you or your family unit receiving assistance with food now? (N=159)

Almost half of the respondents are receiving food assistance from churches or mosques, while a third also indicated that they are receiving food from SACC at Khotso House in Johannesburg. In the overwhelming majority of cases (91%) this food assistance is being provided once per month.

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

In our survey we aimed to find out where asylum seekers and refugees go to receive medical care. In particular, we asked respondents where they go for emergency care, reproductive health/family planning and primary health care.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE

	N	%
Public hospital	283	48
Don't use this service	239	41
Local public clinic	36	6
Private hospital	17	3
Local private clinic	9	2
General Practitioner (GP)/Surgery	4	1
Pharmacy	2	0
Total	**590**	**100**

Table 93: Where do you or a member of your family unit most often go for emergency care?

Almost half of the respondents indicated that they most often go to public hospitals for emergency care. It is worthy of note that two fifths of the sample had never experienced an emergency and therefore had never tried to access emergency health care.

	Public hospital	Other	Don't use the service	Total
Angola	65%	20%	15%	100% (N=124)
Burundi	39%	14%	47%	100% (N=49)
Congo-Brazza	83%	8%	10%	100% (N=40)
DRC	38%	9%	53%	100% (N=145)
Ethiopia	31%	9%	60%	100% (N=35)
Rwanda	80%	3%	17%	100% (N=35)
Somalia	36%	11%	53%	100% (N=130)
Other countries	28%	6%	66%	100% (N=32)
Total	**48%**	**12%**	**41%**	**100% (N=590)**

Table 94: Where do you or a member of your family unit most often go for emergency care?, by country of origin

Respondents from DRC, Ethiopia, Somalia and the grouping of other countries in the sample were the most likely to indicate that they have never used this service. In contrast, respondents from Angola, Congo Brazzaville and Rwanda were the most likely to resort to public hospitals for assistance.

When we asked respondents to indicate how much they pay for emergency care at public hospitals, responses varied from R10 to R200. On average, however, respondents pay R37.

Of 380 respondents who indicated that they had tried to access emergency medical care, we found that 13% of respondents, despite constitutional protections to the contrary, had been refused emergency medical care.

	N	**%**
Yes	51	13
No	329	87
Total	**380**	**100**

Table 95: Have you or a member of your family unit ever been refused EMERGENCY MEDICAL care?

We asked respondents who had been refused assistance to state who specifically denied them assistance.

	Yes	
	# of responses	**%**
Emergency medical care was refused by Administration/Reception	30	59%
Emergency medical care was refused by Nurse/Sister	10	20%
The ambulance was called but never arrived	6	12%
Emergency medical care was refused by Doctor	4	8%
Emergency medical care was refused by Paramedic/ambulance staff	2	4%
Emergency medical care was refused by Security guard	1	2%

Table 96: Who specifically refused to provide you with Emergency Medical care? (N=51)

As the table above illustrates, more than half of the respondents indicated that administrative personnel, largely at public hospitals, had refused them care in the majority of cases, while nurses or sisters were cited as denying access in one fifth of the cases.

	Yes	
	# of responses	**%**
A number of reasons	15	29%
Don't know why emergency medical care was refused	11	22%
Did not accept my documents	10	20%
I was unable to pay required fee	10	20%
I did not have any ID document/permit	5	10%
Problems of communication (language barriers)	2	4%
Services were only provided to South Africans	2	4%
Asked for proof of residence (e.g., electrical bill)	2	4%

Table 97: What reasons were provided to you for refusing Emergency Medical care? (N=51)

The largest proportion of respondents indicated that they were refused assistance for a number of reasons. These included what respondents labelled 'false' reasons such as the administrative assistant trying to look busy, respondents being told that their child was not sick, that no further appointments would be possible, and so on. Interestingly, more than one fifth of respondents had no idea why they were refused medical care.

It is of concern that one fifth of the respondents who had sought emergency medical care were unable to obtain access to emergency care due to the hospital not accepting documents, while another fifth was refused for being unable to pay for emergency health care. Both of these reasons for denial contradict everyone's constitutional right to have access to emergency medical care.

We asked respondents who were refused assistance about what action, if any, they took when this happened.

	Yes	
	# of responses	**%**
I tried another facility	21	41%
I sought assistance from my refugee community	10	20%
I didn't know what to do	8	16%
I did nothing	6	12%
I did something else	4	8%
I reported incident to SAHRC	2	4%
I sought assistance from an NGO	1	2%
I reported incident to facility management	0	0%
I reported incident to SAPS	0	0%
I sought assistance from my church/mosque	0	0%

Table 98: What did you do when you were refused emergency care? (N=51)

The largest proportion of respondents (41%) who were refused emergency care sought, as an alternative, to try another health facility. One fifth of respondents also indicated that they sought help within their refugee community. Of concern here is that cases of refusal are not being reported to the facility management or to entities such as the SAHRC, which could intervene in these matters. In this vein, only one or two respondents appealed to the SAHRC or to NGOs that work with refugees.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE/FAMILY PLANNING

The majority of our sample (80%) indicated that they do not use reproductive health care or family planning. Not surprisingly, male respondents were significantly more likely than women to state that they do not use these services. Those who do make use of these services either go to public hospitals (11%) or public clinics (8%). On average, respondents pay R35 for these services.

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

	N	%
Public hospital	242	41
Local public clinic	163	28
Don't use this service	118	20
Pharmacy	38	6
Private hospital	14	2
Local private clinic	12	2
General Practitioner (GP)/Surgery	2	0
Traditional healer	1	0
Total	**590**	**100**

Table 99: Where do you or a member of your family unit most often go for primary health care?

The majority of respondents rely on public institutions for this type of health care. In particular, two fifths go to public hospitals, while 28% rely on local public clinics. Those who go to public hospitals pay, on average, an amount of R37. Those who go to public clinics, paid between R8 and R80, with an average of R31 for all respondents.

We asked respondents who had attempted to access primary health care, whether they had ever been refused health care. The majority of respondents (92%) indicated that they had never been refused care.

In our sample, 8% or 39 respondents were refused non-emergency health care. In half of these cases, it was administrative personnel who denied respondents access, followed by nurses and doctors themselves who refused to assist patients.

When these respondents were asked about the reasons for their being refused access, the three most mentioned reasons were respondents' inability to pay the required fee, the unwillingness of administrative personnel and nurses to accept respondents' documents, and not having any ID document or permit.

	N
I was unable to pay required fee	11
They did not accept my documents	10
I did not have any ID document/permit	8
Services only provided to South Africans	6
Don't know why non-emergency health care was refused	5
Too many people to see before doctor left	5
Other reason	3
I was asked for proof of residence (e.g., electrical bill)	2
Problems of communication (language barriers)	1

Table 100: What reasons were provided to you for refusing non-emergency medical assistance?

When asked what they did when they were refused non-emergency medical care, 12 of the respondents tried another facility, 8 did not know what to do, while 7 did

nothing. Only 2 respondents reported their problem to the facility management, while only one person went to the SA Human Rights Commission to lodge a complaint.

ABILITY TO PAY FOR SERVICES

	Yes	
	N	**%**
I don't pay for health care services	218	37%
I use money from salary/wages to pay for health care services	195	33%
I rely on refugee friends to help me pay for health care services	99	17%
I rely on relatives to help me pay for health care services	54	9%
I rely on assistance from organisations that work with refugees to pay	37	6%
I don't use the service	27	5%
I use other sources to pay for health care services	15	3%
My refugee community helps to pay for health care services	12	2%
I rely on my church to help	7	1%

Table 101: How do you manage to pay for health care services?

The largest proportion of respondents indicated that they do not pay for health care services, while 5% don't use them in the first place. While one third of respondents rely on their own income to pay for healthcare, a quarter of the sample also indicated that they resort to family and friends for assistance.

	Yes	
	# of responses	**%**
I find out from refugee friends	360	61%
I decide on my own	83	14%
I find out from relatives	77	13%
I find out from members of my refugee community	62	11%
I find out from organisations that work with refugees	45	8%
I find out from South African friends	38	6%
Other source of information	32	5%
I find out from my church/mosque	26	4%
I don't know where to go	21	4%
I find out from local South Africans	20	3%
I find out from Dept. of Home Affairs	1	0%

Table 102: How do you find out about where to go for health care services?

Respondents mentioned most often that they find out from refugee friends where to go for health care (61%). In contrast, 14% of respondents mentioned that they do not rely on anyone for information but instead decide on their own where they will go.

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

In this survey, we focused mainly on access to primary and secondary school education. Due to space constraints, we were unable to focus on pre-school or tertiary education.

PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION

Firstly, we asked respondents whether they had any children or dependents living with them of primary school going age. We found that 17% of respondents have children or dependents with them that fall within this age.

Secondly, we asked respondents who have children of primary school going age (98 respondents), whether they are sending them to school. The majority of respondents send their children to school. Children go to schools that, on average, are 4 kms away from the place where they stay. The distances range from less than 1 km away to a few cases where children go to school 30 or 40 kms away from the place where they stay.

However, we found that 30% of respondents who have children of primary school going age are not sending them to school[16]. Most of these respondents (25 out of 29) indicated that they are not sending their children to primary school because they don't have the money to afford the school fees. The majority of these children come from households that have either two or three meals a day. However, half of these children belong to households that have six or more members. It is possible that income might be allocated to food and shelter and therefore insufficient to pay for school fees. Whichever the case may be, this is particularly of concern given that each school must have an exemption policy that parents who cannot afford to pay fees can apply for. It is likely that parents of asylum seeker and refugee children are not aware of the existence of exemptions and of the conditions under which a school can refuse a child from attending.

Considering that the study prohibition on asylum seeker children has been lifted, we tried to find out whether asylum seekers and refugees are experiencing problems in sending their children to school. In particular, we asked respondents with children of primary school going age if those children had ever been refused admission to the local primary school. In responding to this question, almost one third of respondents (32%) indicated that their children had been refused admission. The main reasons for refusal were:

[16] This compares, to some degree, to figures from the 1996 Census which indicate that 16% of children within the compulsory education school band are not attending school. The 30% reported in this study refers to households and not specific children in those households. For this reason, it is likely that our household-based figures are underreporting the actual incidences of non-school attendance per child, as households could have more than one child that is not being sent to school. However, even if underreported, the figures for asylum seeker and refugee children are almost double those for South African children based on the 1996 Census.

	N
Cannot afford to pay school fees	10
School is full	9
School did not accept papers or permit	7
School only accepts South African children	2
Other	2
Too late to register	1
Total	**31**

Table 103: What was the main reason given for not admitting your children/dependents to the local primary school?

Once again, children are being turned away from their local primary schools because they can't afford to pay for school fees, because the school is full, or alternatively because schools do not accept asylum seeker and refugee permits.

These reasons point to the lack of access to information from both sides. On one hand, despite the fact that the children of asylum seekers, as well as refugee children, have the right to study, it would seem that schools are not aware of this development and neither are parents. On one hand, it is likely that schools do not know that asylum seeker and refugee children have the right to study, while on the other hand it would seem that parents are not fighting based on the right of their children to go to school. They are most likely accepting what is told to them by school authorities due to their own lack of information about their children's right to go to school.

We asked respondents who indicated that their children had been refused admission to the local primary school about the actions that they took, if any, when their children were refused admission.

	N
I tried another facility	12
I did nothing	9
I sought assistance from an NGO	4
I did something else	3
I sought assistance from DHA	3
I Sought assistance from my church/mosque	2
I Sought assistance from my refugee community	1
I reported incident to the school management	0
I reported incident to South African Human Rights Commission	0

Table 104: What did you do when your child/dependent was refused admission to the local primary school? (N=31)

Out of the 31 respondents who answered this question, 12 indicated that they tried to go to other schools, while 9 of them did nothing about their children being refused attendance to the local primary school. The fact that no respondents reported the matter to the school management or to the SAHRC indicates that parents are unaware of their rights or of the work that has been carried out by the SAHRC in lifting the prohibition on study.

SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION

We found that only 8% of our sample (47 respondents) had children or dependents of secondary school going age. About half of these respondents' children are not attending school and in most cases this is because parents cannot afford to pay for fees.

In addition to the above, eight out of the 47 respondents who have children of secondary school going age indicated that their children had been refused admission to the local secondary school. The main reason for refusal was parents' inability to pay for school fees (4 cases), and the school being full (2 cases). In four cases, parents took no further action on the refusal, whereas in three cases parents tried other facilities and in two cases sought assistance from NGOs.

ASSESSING NEEDS

While there are a number of needs that asylum seekers and refugees desire to be met, we asked respondents to prioritise the three most important needs that they need assistance with.

	Yes	
	# of responses	**%**
Documentation	313	53%
Employment opportunities	297	50%
Housing/shelter	249	42%
Education for asylum seekers & refugees themselves	233	39%
Food	175	30%
Education for children of asylum seekers/refugees	98	17%
Health care	96	16%
Skills training	76	13%
Resettlement	50	8%
Fair treatment from authorities (DHA, SAPS, SANDF)	41	7%
Combating xenophobia	32	5%
None	23	4%
Clothing	15	3%
Welfare (support for children, disabled)	12	2%
Money/financial assistance	13	2%
Safety & security	13	2%
Don't know	5	1%
Start up capital	8	1%
Other	7	1%

Table 105: What are the three most important basic needs that you need assistance with?

The three most mentioned priorities in our sample were: Documentation (53%), employment opportunities (50%), and housing and shelter (42%). It is not surprising that documentation appears highest on the list, considering that access to

documentation is directly linked to the ability to find employment and have a source of income that ensures the survival of respondents and their family units.

Congo Brazzaville and Somali respondents were the most likely to mention documentation as one of their priority needs. This is to be expected considering that the majority of respondents from these two countries in our sample are asylum seekers. The majority of Congo Brazzaville respondents in our sample applied on or after April 2000 and most of them are asylum seekers with the prohibition of work and study. Similarly, 60% of Somali respondents who applied before April 2000 have had their status reversed to that of asylum seekers, while 80% of those who applied on or after April 2000 are still asylum seekers.

Respondents who arrived before the year 2000 were significantly more likely to argue for documentation. Considering that 27% of respondents who arrived before 2000 are still waiting for a decision to be made on their refugee applications, this is not surprising.

Respondents from DRC and other countries were the most likely to argue for employment opportunities. Once again, this is in line with previous findings which show that DRC respondents, despite their high levels of education, were also the most likely to be unemployed.

In contrast, respondents from Angola, Burundi and Rwanda were the most likely to mention housing, as a priority need.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

While not many questions were asked about community involvement, we tried to get a sense of the degree to which respondents interact with different kinds of people, their impressions about South Africans and how they think South Africans see them, as well as whether they participate in different types of organisations generally found within communities.

As this section will show, asylum seekers and refugees in our sample tend to have regular contact with people from their home country, with South Africans in their local communities, and with other foreigners. Against assumptions that refugee communities might be insular, we found that the majority of asylum seekers and refugees in our sample have regular contact with South Africans; 49% of respondents sometimes interact with them, while 25% interact with them often. In addition, the majority of respondents (61%) indicated that they sometimes interact with other foreigners, while 17% do so more regularly.

Despite this level of interaction, over half of the sample (56%) perceived South Africans in a negative light. Similarly, the majority of the respondents believe that South Africans see them in an extremely negative light. Not only do the asylum seekers and refugees in our sample think that South Africans see them as stealing wives and jobs (69%), but also that they confuse them with undocumented migrants (5%) and treat them like animals (3%).

While respondents seem to interact with individual South Africans on a regular basis, they do not participate actively in a number of community organisations. By far, churches or mosques represent the most popular organisation that respondents belong to.

INTERACTION WITH DIFFERENT GROUPS OF PEOPLE

Focusing on their own communities, we asked respondents specifically about how often they interact with people from their own country, South Africans, as well as other foreigners.

INTERACTION WITH PEOPLE FROM RESPONDENTS' COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Respondents for the most part have regular contact with people from their own country. In particular, (61%) interact with them often, while 30% do so sometimes.

	Male	Female	Total
Never	8%	9%	8% (N=47)
Sometimes	28%	47%	31% (N=182)
Often	65%	45%	61% (N=359)
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100% (N=588)**

Table 106: How often do you interact with people from your home country?, by sex of respondent

However, we found that female respondents tended to have a lesser degree of contact than male respondents. In particular, female respondents were significantly more likely than male respondents to interact with people from their own country sometimes (47% vs. 28% respectively), as opposed to often.

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Total
Angola	9%	33%	58%	100% (N=124)
Burundi	2%	18%	80%	100% (N=49)
Congo-Brazza	8%	43%	50%	100% (N=40)
DRC	5%	46%	50%	100% (N=145)
Ethiopia	63%	9%	29%	100% (N=35)
Rwanda	0%	41%	59%	100% (N=34)
Somalia	2%	13%	85%	100% (N=130)
Other countries	3%	47%	50%	100% (N=32)
Total	**8%**	**31%**	**61%**	**100% (N=589)**

Table 107: In your community in South Africa, how often do you interact with people from your home country?

While the majority of respondents have some level of interaction with people from their home countries in their own communities, one of the exceptions to this rule involves Ethiopian respondents. They were by far the most likely to argue that they never interact with people from their home country. This could be due to the fact that Ethiopian respondents tended to be young, usually less than 30 years old, the majority of them were single and most of them came to South Africa alone. Since respondents from Ethiopia tend to be single and come alone, it might be difficult for them to establish a support network that they interact with. In contrast, Somali and Burundian respondents were significantly more likely than all other respondents to engage with people from their home country. At least in terms of the Somali community, this highlights the advanced social networks that this community has established in Johannesburg and Pretoria.

INTERACTION WITH SOUTH AFRICANS IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Against assumptions that refugee communities might be insular, we found that the majority of asylum seekers and refugees in our sample also have regular contact with South Africans. While one quarter of respondents (26%) never interact with South Africans, 49% sometimes interact with them, while 25% interact with them often.

	Male	Female	Total
Never	24%	36%	26%
Sometimes	49%	47%	49%
Often	27%	17%	25%
Total	**100% (N=481)**	**100% (N=105)**	**100% (N=586)**

Table 108: How often do you interact with South Africans who are part of your local community?, by sex of respondent

Despite the fact that the majority of respondents have some interaction with South Africans, we found that women in our sample were significantly less likely than men (36% to 24% respectively) to have any interaction with South Africans. Male respondents were significantly more likely to interact often with South Africans.

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Total
Angola	15%	58%	27%	100% (N=124)
Burundi	10%	45%	45%	100% (N=49)
Congo-Brazza	15%	38%	48%	100% (N=40)
DRC	35%	48%	17%	100% (N=143)
Ethiopia	74%	26%	0%	100% (N=35)
Rwanda	0%	57%	43%	100% (N=35)
Somalia	34%	49%	17%	100% (N=129)
Other countries	9%	47%	44%	100% (N=32)
Total	**26%**	**49%**	**25%**	**100% (N=587)**

Table 109: How often do you interact with South Africans who are part of your local community?, by country of origin

Respondents from Somalia, Ethiopia and the DRC were the least likely to have any interaction with South Africans. Respondents from all other countries except Angola were likely to have regular contact with South Africans. While still having contact with South Africans, Angolans were the most likely to interact with South Africans sometimes, as opposed to often.

INTERACTION WITH OTHER FOREIGNERS

The majority of respondents (61%) indicated that they sometimes interact with other foreigners, while 17% do so more regularly.

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Total
Angola	12%	72%	16%	100% (N=124)
Burundi	6%	84%	10%	100% (N=49)
Congo-Brazza	3%	53%	45%	100% (N=40)
DRC	22%	60%	18%	100% (N=145)
Ethiopia	66%	29%	6%	100% (N=35)
Rwanda	3%	77%	20%	100% (N=35)
Somalia	42%	48%	10%	100% (N=129)
Other countries	6%	63%	31%	100% (N=32)
Total	**22%**	**61%**	**17%**	**100% (N=589)**

Table 110: In your community, how often do you interact with other foreigners?, by country of origin

Except for Somalis and Ethiopians, respondents from all other countries indicated that they had some form of interaction with other foreigners. In particular, respondents from Burundi, Angola and Rwanda were more likely to indicate that they often interact with other foreigners, whereas respondents from Congo-Brazzaville and from the grouping of other countries were the most likely to interact with other foreigners often.

PERCEPTIONS OF ONE ANOTHER

Over the past few years, a number of studies have shown that levels of xenophobia in South Africa are high. Without putting words into respondents' mouths, we asked them to describe their impressions or perceptions about South Africans. This is what they had to say.

	N	%
South Africans do not like foreigners - no jobs, they call us names	197	33
South Africans are bad people - hostile, aggressive, ignorant	137	23
South Africans are generally good & friendly people	118	20
Some South Africans are good and others are bad	82	14
No difference between South Africans and other people	35	6
I don't know	21	4
Total	**590**	**100**

Table 111: What is your impression or perception about South Africans?

Over half of the sample (56%) perceived South Africans in a negative light. In one third of the cases, respondents expressed that South Africans do not like foreigners, they are xenophobic, and often call respondents "makwerekwere".

In addition, 23% of respondents indicated that South Africans are particularly hostile and aggressive, often due to being ignorant about the plight of refugees.

	SAns are hostile	SAns do not like foreigners	No difference	SAns are good people	Some are good, some are bad	Total
Angola	28%	14%	15%	24%	19%	100% (N=116)
Burundi	12%	69%	2%	2%	14%	100% (N=49)
Congo-Brazza	15%	50%	8%	10%	18%	100% (N=40)
DRC	37%	41%	5%	11%	6%	100% (N=143)
Ethiopia	14%	46%	0%	23%	17%	100% (N=35)
Rwanda	3%	47%	0%	27%	24%	100% (N=34)
Somalia	22%	20%	5%	36%	17%	100% (N=122)
Other countries	20%	43%	3%	27%	7%	100% (N=30)
Total	**24%**	**35%**	**6%**	**21%**	**14%**	**100% (N=569)**

Table 112: What are your perceptions of South Africans?, by country of origin

Respondents from DRC and Burundi were the most likely to see South Africans negatively. More specifically, DRC respondents tended to think of South Africans as being hostile while Burundians emphasised South Africans being xenophobic.

Statistically speaking, the degree of interaction between asylum seekers or refugees and South Africans did not have an effect on perception of South Africans. This is illustrated in the case of Somalis. While Somalis were amongst the respondents to have the least interaction with South Africans, they were also the most likely to see South Africans as good and friendly people. Somalis tend to have been in the country for a longer period of time than asylum seekers and refugees from other countries, and while this does not seem to have led to greater contact with South Africans, it might have allowed Somalis to find a comfortable medium with South Africans, where Somalis and South Africans allow each other to carry on with their own affairs without being hostile to one another.

There were no significant differences regarding perceptions of South Africans based on level of education, date of arrival, sex or age.

In addition to asking respondents about their own perceptions about South Africans, we also asked respondents to describe how they think South Africans perceive them.

	N	**%**
South Africans see me as a foreigner/makwerekwere who is here to steal wives & jobs	405	69
Don't know	56	10
South Africans see me as a illegal immigrant	31	5
South Africans see me as a good person	31	5
South Africans see me as a normal human being	29	5
Some South Africans treat me well while others don't	22	4
South Africans treat me like an animal	16	3
Total	**590**	**100**

Table 113: How do you think South Africans see you?

Without prompting, the majority of the respondents believe that South Africans see them in an extremely negative light. Not only do the asylum seekers and refugees in our sample think that South Africans see them as stealing wives and jobs (69%), but also that they confuse them with undocumented migrants (5%) and treat them like animals (3%).

It is interesting to note the small number of respondents (4%) who were willing to differentiate amongst South Africans. The majority of respondents answered the question without attempting to argue that not all South Africans are the same and that some might be better than others. Considering that the majority of respondents in our sample have some form of interaction with South Africans, this cannot easily be attributed to lack of contact between these two groups. These impressions, however, could be the result of asylum seekers' and refugees' largely negative experiences in their interactions with South Africans.

Angolans were significantly more likely to describe that South Africans see them positively while respondents from DRC were the most likely to feel that South Africans perceive them negatively. Not surprisingly, respondents who arrived in South Africa in 2000 or more recently were the least likely to know how South Africans perceive them.

There were no significant differences based on sex, age or level of education of respondents.

PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

In addition to asking about one-on-one interaction with different groups of people, we also sought to find out the degree to which respondents are integrated into activities taking place within their own communities. For this reason, we asked respondents if they belong to a number of organisations that are generally found in communities.

	Yes	
	N	**%**
Religious organisation/churches/mosques?	345	58%
Sports clubs?	50	8%
Youth groups?	38	6%
Cultural organisation?	30	5%
Burial/Funeral society mainly for refugees?	14	2%
Community development committee?	9	2%
Student organisation?	13	2%
Burial Society for local community?	4	1%
Women's refugee organisation?	5	1%
Civic organisation?	4	1%
Community Police Forum?	4	1%
School governing body (SGB)?	6	1%
Stokvel/savings club?	6	1%
Women's groups within local community?	4	1%
Cooperative?	3	1%
Any other organisation?	6	1%

Table 114: Do you belong to any of the following organisations?

While our findings show that respondents interact with individual South Africans on a fairly regular basis, they also show that respondents do not participate actively in community organisations. Churches or mosques represent by far the most popular organisation that respondents belong to. Some respondents belong to youth or sports clubs, but for the most part, the findings show that asylum seekers and refugees in our sample are not active in organisations within their communities.

Considering this finding, awareness campaigns aimed at refugee communities should probably enlist the assistance of community churches or mosques to be successful.

If we compare these findings to those from the 1996 Census for Gauteng province, we find that while asylum seekers and refugees are less likely to be actively involved in

community organisations, they have a higher percentage of participation in religious organisations than people in Gauteng or in South Africa as a whole. This is shown in the table below.

	National	Gauteng	Our sample
Religious Organisation	33%	37%	58%
Burial Society	35%	26%	2%
Political Organisation	12%	10%	0%
Sports Clubs	12%	10%	8%
Civic Organisation	4%	5%	1%
Cultural Organisation	4%	4%	5%
Stokvel/Savings Club	7%	4%	1%
Women's Group	6%	4%	1%
Trade Union	5%	3%	0%
Youth Group	4%	3%	6%
Community Police Forum	2%	2%	1%
Community Development Committee	3%	2%	2%

Table 115: Membership of organisations in Gauteng[17] and our sample

While only 37% of respondents in Gauteng belong to religious organisations, 58% of asylum seekers and refugees in our sample do so. Moreover, asylum seekers and refugees in our sample tended to be slightly more involved in cultural and youth organisations than residents of Gauteng.

[17] Note: the percentages of membership of organisations will not add up to 100, as some people surveyed belonged to more than one club, society or organisation and others did not belong to any at all. Data obtained from the 1996 Census.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions included below apply to asylum seekers and refugees living largely within Gauteng province, and particularly Johannesburg and Pretoria. It is expected that as the study is extended nationally, this will allow findings and conclusions drawn, to be generalised to understand the situation of asylum seekers and refugees in the country as a whole. Nonetheless, considering that Johannesburg and Pretoria house a significant proportion of the refugee population in South Africa, it could be argued that these findings are instructive and indicative of the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees nationally.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

CONCLUSIONS

The findings from the study show that African refugees coming into the country tend to be relatively young, many of them having been students prior to coming to South Africa, and single. Most of them are fluent in English, have completed Matric or a higher level of education, and a large proportion of them have the experience of having worked in skilled and semi-skilled occupations. In other words, refugees are coming into South Africa with a diversity of skills that could be put to good use in a number of sectors of the South African economy. However, despite the South African government's emphasis on favouring largely skilled people to settle in South Africa, a large proportion of refugees who are skilled and are currently in the country are not allowed to exercise their skills. Instead, the majority of asylum seekers and refugees who were holding skilled or semi-skilled occupations before coming to South Africa are now either working in unskilled occupations or otherwise unemployed. Per capita monthly income compares with that of poor Africans in South Africa, with the exception that asylum seekers and refugees tend to be better educated, skilled, but unable to support themselves or to access social grants to supplement their income.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The South African government must recognise the valuable contribution that asylum seekers and refugees can make to the South African economy and refrain from assuming that refugees are unskilled people or "economic migrants" in search of better work opportunities. Our findings show that many of the refugees who are currently in South Africa seem to have had better work opportunities while they were in their own countries and not in South Africa. The government should recognise that South Africans could benefit from the skills that asylum seekers and refugees can impart.

- Refugee service providers whose focus is on skills provision and training, should rely on asylum seekers and refugees themselves to impart their skills and train others.

EXPERIENCES UPON ARRIVAL IN SOUTH AFRICA

CONCLUSIONS

Despite the fact that the majority of respondents in our sample indicated that they came to South Africa alone, our findings regarding shelter and housing upon arrival nonetheless give a strong indication of the existence of support networks for asylum seekers who are new arrivals into the country. This is exemplified by the fact that only 4% of respondents stayed at shelters upon arrival while the majority stayed with either refugee friends or relatives. While we have argued that the low proportion of asylum seekers staying at shelters might also be due to the fact that asylum seekers might find out very quickly that the government provides very limited assistance to new arrivals, the finding that almost 70% of respondents relied on refugee friends or relatives for assistance upon arrival also illustrates that this is not likely to be the result of haphazard word of mouth information, but rather of more established and well-known coping strategies.

These networks might also help to explain how respondents gained access to food upon arrival. In our survey we found that less than one quarter of respondents received food assistance within their first three months in the country. This might indicate that either asylum seekers are bringing with them enough resources to sustain themselves during the first few months or possibly that these networks are supporting them.

For those respondents who relied on food assistance upon arrival, our findings show that churches and mosques, together with JRS, play an important role in providing assistance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- These findings highlight the importance of conducting more in-depth research into the existence of networks, how they were formed, how far they extend and the extent of the support that they are able to provide to newcomers. This would also allow UNHCR and service providers to assess whether it is more fruitful to give support to these networks or to continue to establish separate shelters to house asylum seekers and refugees upon arrival and give out individual food parcels.

- Obtaining more information about these networks could also influence possible support from local Departments of Welfare and Social Services. It is

the practice of these departments to provide assistance in the form of transfer payments to NGOs or other organisations that act as implementing partners in delivering a range of social services that fall under these departments. If the networks are strong enough, these could be institutionalised in such a way as to facilitate access to this type of government assistance.

INTERACTION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS

CONCLUSIONS

Our findings highlight a number of issues that need to be addressed in relation to the Department of Home Affairs' processing of refugee applications. As previously indicated, despite the Department's attempts to clear the backlog of applications that fell under the Aliens Control Act, over a quarter of respondents who applied prior to April 2000 are still awaiting decisions on their applications. There is also evidence that a backlog of applications is forming for asylum seekers who applied under the Refugee Act of 1998. Three quarters of respondents who applied under this Act and who indicated that they were still awaiting a decision have been waiting for a period that extends from 7 months to 3 years, with the majority of them waiting for a period of between one and two years.

This finding is even more alarming considering that the majority of asylum seekers who applied under the Refugee Act of 1998 and who have been waiting for more than 6 months for their status to be determined had no knowledge that they could petition for the work and study prohibition to be lifted if six months had expired without the Department making a decision on their applications. At the same time, it is necessary to question whether *only* asylum seekers' knowledge of this regulation would have an impact in forcing Home Affairs to honour this regulation considering that over half of the respondents in our sample who knew about this right and who applied for the prohibition to be lifted did not succeed.

In addition to this problem, we found that there are a number of barriers that asylum seekers and refugees are experiencing at different stages of the refugee determination process, namely submission of applications for refugee status, renewal of asylum permits, and renewal of refugee permits. These barriers tend to be experienced mostly at the Braamfontein Refugee Reception Office. The most concerning of these barriers are respondents being required to pay or bribe someone for the different services, or not being allowed into the Refugee Reception Office. At each of the three stages examined, approximately a quarter of respondents indicated that one of the main barriers was being asked to pay someone, while up to one quarter complained about being unable to access the Office.

There is ample evidence that significant amounts of money are exchanging hands between asylum seekers and refugees on one hand, and interpreters and Home Affairs officials on the other. The most worrying aspect is that this illegal practice is mostly going unreported as very few asylum seekers and refugees are lodging complaints with the police or with entities such as the SA Human Rights Commission. Without this concrete evidence, it is very difficult to challenge the Department to act on this problem.

Lack of access to the Refugee Reception Office tends to be a problem mainly focused on the Braamfontein Office. Security guards working for the Department of Home Affairs lock the doors to the Office after a certain number of asylum seekers and refugees come in each day, thus leaving a number of people without being able to access the Office. This in turn has serious consequences for asylum seekers and refugees left outside who have no documentary proof that they have attempted to apply for asylum or renew their asylum permits at the Office. This has led a number of NGOs to issue letters to asylum seekers and refugees stating that the person was at the Refugee Reception Office but was not allowed in, just in case that they are harassed by government authorities for not having any, or expired, documents. Asylum seekers and refugees who hold no documents or expired documents face being arrested or taken to detention centres, with little regard by the police to listen to their attempts to access the Office.

Focusing more broadly on the issuing of documents, despite claims to the contrary by the Department, the lack of proper ID documents issued to asylum seekers who are granted the right to work which need to be renewed on a short-term basis do not facilitate asylum seekers' ability to obtain employment to support themselves, as employers are sceptical of hiring individuals that have a legal status only for one or three months. These documents also do not facilitate asylum seeker or refugee access to basic services such as healthcare, education, and opening bank accounts. In this vein, very few refugees in our sample indicated that they had been issued with maroon identity documents. Regardless of the form that documents take at present, entities such as employers, banks, as well as hospital and school administrative staff often do not recognise these documents because they do not consider them to be official forms of documentation; instead they regard them as "fake" or easily forgeable pieces of identification. Not only does this limit the right of asylum seekers and refugees to access basic services that they are entitled to under the South African Constitution, but also deny asylum seekers and refugees the ability to contribute their skills to the South African economy, as it is very difficult for them to secure employment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- UNHCR, jointly with legal NGOs such as Lawyers for Human Rights, Wits Law Clinic, as well as the NCRA, should undertake awareness campaigns with asylum seekers to inform them of their right to petition the Standing Committee to lift the prohibition on work and study if six months have expired

and the Department of Home Affairs has not made a decision on their refugee applications. At the same time, these entities must engage in discussions with the Department to find out why petitions lodged by asylum seekers for the lifting of the prohibition are not being honoured. If negotiations prove fruitless, it might be necessary to consider legal action to challenge Home Affairs directly to implement this right.

- The NCRA and the Roll Back Xenophobia Campaign should undertake awareness campaigns with asylum seekers and refugees, as well as refugee organisations to encourage asylum seekers and refugees to lodge complaints against incidents of bribery and corruption or to seek assistance from legal NGOs, such as Lawyers for Human Rights and Wits Law Clinic, on how to engage in this process. Asylum seekers and refugees are likely to feel quite vulnerable or afraid that their names will be known to the Department in this process and therefore are likely to require support from legal NGOs to engage in this process.

- UNHCR and NCRA should hold discussions with entities such as the Black Sash and the Public Services Commission which have attempted to institute systems at the Pretoria Refugee Reception Office to curb practices of bribery and corruption. It would seem that the systems instituted at the Refugee Reception Office in Pretoria have helped to lessen bribery incidents to some extent.

- Concurrently, UNHCR should consider funding a number of interpreters at each of the Refugee Reception Offices who can provide translation services to asylum seekers and refugees during the different stages of the refugee determination process. UNHCR would need to make the names of these individuals known to asylum seekers and refugees, as well as indicate that they can be approached for assistance without their needing to be paid. In the case that these interpreters ask for payments or are seen to be receiving payments, asylum seekers and refugees should be instructed to report these individuals directly to the UNHCR.

- If a limit to the number of asylum seekers and refugees who are allowed into the Refugee Reception Office in Braamfontein must be implemented, the Department of Home Affairs, rather than NGOs working with asylum seekers and refugees, must issue letters to asylum seekers and refugees who make attempts to access the Office that could act as proof to different government authorities and service providers that they have attempted to access the Refugee Reception Office.

- With regard to the issuing of documentation, the Department of Home Affairs should consider issuing asylum permits for a period of six months. If the six months expire without the Department having made a decision on

applications, asylum seekers should be issued with permits that are valid for a further period of six months that grant them the right to work and study. Extending the validity of the asylum permits would lead to a reduction in the workload of the understaffed Refugee Reception Offices.

- In addition to extending the validity of the asylum permits, the Department should formalise these forms of identification, by laminating them and putting anti-forgery marks or marks that can only be seen with UV light, so that they can be more easily accepted by different entities. The permits' current form as multiply-folded pieces of paper with a number of stamps on them do not facilitate asylum seekers' and refugees' access to a number of basic social and financial services as these documents are often perceived to be fake.

- Upon determination of refugee status, the Department of Home Affairs must immediately issue all recognised refugees with formal maroon identity documents.

- Upon formalisation of the different forms of documentation (for asylum seekers and refugees), the Department, in conjunction with UNHCR and entities such as the Roll Back Xenophobia campaign, Lawyers for Human Rights, NCRA and Wits Law Clinic must engage in a massive awareness campaign with government officials within key departments such as Health, Education, Labour and Social Development to make officials and administrative personnel working under these departments aware of what the different forms of identification issued to asylum seekers and refugees look like.

CURRENT LIVING CONDITIONS

CONCLUSIONS

Considering the problems with the issuing of documents raised previously, it was not surprising to find that respondents in our sample identified the lack of proper documentation, whether in the form of a lack of a formal ID document or not having permission to work as both their main difficulty in accessing employment as well as their most pressing need that they require assistance with. Linked to employment, the study found that the large majority of respondents who had an employer did not know where to resort for assistance if problems with their employers arise. While it is likely that this lack of knowledge is comparable to that of ordinary South Africans, it is of concern that asylum seekers and refugees in particular lack this knowledge, as they can often be more vulnerable to exploitation due to their temporary status and their being foreigners.

Similarly, it is of concern that a large proportion of respondents in our sample who stay in places where they pay rent currently do not know where to go if problems with landlords arise. Once again, while it is likely that a large proportion of ordinary South Africans also lack this knowledge, it is important to keep in mind that asylum seekers and refugees are in a particularly vulnerable position, due to their lacking bank accounts, the possible existence of language barriers, their lack of permanent employment, and their problems with documentation which could facilitate landlords' taking advantage of their situation.

Asylum seekers' and refugees' lack of knowledge about their rights also became evident in our findings on access to healthcare and education. As it was stated previously, 13% of respondents who tried to access emergency health care indicated that they were refused assistance mostly by administrative personnel at public hospitals. While some of these respondents did not know why they were refused care, other reasons included non-acceptance of documents, inability to pay the required fee or lack of any type of documentation. Despite respondents' awareness of why they were turned away, none of the respondents who were refused assistance reported the incident to the facility management. Instead, many respondents sought to try another facility or seek assistance from their refugee communities. This could indicate that either asylum seekers and refugees are not aware of their constitutionally-protected rights to access emergency care; or otherwise, if they are aware, that they might be too afraid to confront administrative personnel.

Similarly, we found that 30% of respondents who had children of primary school going age are not sending their children to primary school mostly because they are unable to pay for the school fees. In addition, one third of respondents with children of primary school going age indicated that their children had been refused admission to the local school, mainly due to respondents' inability to pay for fees, the school being full or the failure of the school to accept their documents. None of the respondents reported these problems to the school management but chose instead to either try another school or do nothing about the refusal. As in the case with refusal of emergency health care, it would seem that respondents are unaware of the rights of their children to study and not to be turned away due to their inability to pay fees, the school being full or failure to accept documents. Had respondents had this knowledge of their children's rights, they might have been tempted to report the incident to the school management or seek assistance from NGOs. At the same time, respondents might not have felt confident enough to fight for their rights and therefore chose to try other schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Taking into account that documentation has been identified by respondents as a key element not only to access employment and ensure survival, but also to access basic social and financial services, the UNHCR should strengthen its focus on working closely with the Department of Home Affairs on the

formalisation of identity documents to asylum seekers and refugees, as well as on their being issued in a timely fashion.

- Legal service providers as well as the NCRA should compile a pamphlet for asylum seekers and refugees that includes the main laws that protect employees in the workplace, avenues and procedures for settling disputes, as well as entities that can be contacted if problems with employers arise.

- Similarly, legal service providers and the NCRA should compile a pamphlet for asylum seekers and refugees that includes people's rights and obligations as tenants, as well as existing avenues for dealing with landlord problems, such as the Housing Tribunal.

- The findings emanating from this report surrounding access to services such as healthcare and education show that urgent awareness campaigns have to be undertaken with both asylum seekers and refugees on one hand, and with the National Departments of Health and Education on the other. Each asylum seeker and refugee should be aware of their constitutionally-protected right to have access to emergency care regardless of whether they can pay or not or whether they have particular kinds of documents. In addition, each asylum seeker and refugee should be conscientised of the right of their children to go to primary school, of the fact that a primary school cannot turn away a child because his/her parents/guardians cannot afford to pay for school fees, because the school is full or because the school does not recognise their documents. At the same time, however, access to these basic rights should not have to be fought by asylum seekers, refugees or service providers on a case-by-case (hospital or school) basis. For this reason, while it is important to empower asylum seekers and refugees about their basic rights and where they can go to report infringements on these rights, the UNHCR should devote increasing attention in working more closely with the National Departments of Health and Education to ensure that access to healthcare and education for asylum seekers, refugees and their children becomes accepted as a national policy that is communicated and implemented at the most basic levels, namely hospitals and schools respectively.

- The UNHCR, jointly with its implementing partners and the South African Human Rights Commission must produce information sheets and conduct awareness and education campaigns with asylum seekers and refugees, as well as their representative organisations to inform them of their rights to have access to public health and education services, of their responsibility to inform the South African Human Rights Commission of any infringements of their rights, and of any other institutions that they should approach to lodge such complaints. This information should preferably be conveyed soon after asylum seekers arrive in the country and should be communicated by all implementing service providers, regardless of whether they focus directly on

access to services such as education and healthcare. In this regard, UNHCR should make use of the survival guide compiled by Lawyers for Human Rights to convey this information.

- Simultaneously, the UNHCR should work closely with the Roll Back Xenophobia Campaign, the National Consortium on Refugee Affairs and the South African Human Rights Commission to conduct awareness and education campaigns with national, provincial and local government officials in the Departments of Health and Education on the distinction between asylum seekers and refugees, as well as their respective rights to have access to health and education services.

- In this regard, the National Departments of Health and Education should issue a circular or communiqué to all officials, professionals and administrative personnel at hospital level and school level respectively, which seeks to make them aware of the different types of identification issued to asylum seekers and refugees, including the new maroon and silver identity documents for recognised refugees to ensure that asylum seekers and refugees are not turned away on the basis of improper documentation.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

CONCLUSIONS

Our findings show that respondents in our sample are more likely to interact with different groups of people on an individual basis rather than by being members of community organisations. Against perceptions that refugee communities might be insular, asylum seekers and refugees in our sample have high degrees of contact with people from their own countries, while they have some to regular contact with South Africans and other foreigners. Despite this level of interaction, however, the majority of respondents had very negative perceptions of South Africans while they also felt that South Africans saw them in an extremely negative light. In this regard, the majority of respondents felt that South Africans think of them as people who come to steal their jobs and wives.

The responses obtained to the questions about perceptions of one another indicate that respondents were willing to generalise about all South Africans, despite respondents' levels of interaction with them and consequent ability to differentiate amongst South Africans. It is possible that these negative perceptions might also affect respondents' willingness to participate in a number of local community organisations. Compared to South Africans, asylum seekers and refugees were less likely to be actively involved in a number of community organisations, except for participation in churches and mosques, where asylum seekers and refugees in our sample were more likely to be more actively involved than South Africans nationally. It is possible that

asylum seekers and refugees resort to churches, mosques or other religious organisations for spiritual and personal solace, as well as the support of people from their own countries to overcome difficult times. Participation in other types of community organisations is likely to require asylum seekers and refugees to have a certain degree of acceptance within their communities. Considering the negative perceptions that asylum seekers and refugees have about South Africans and about how they think South Africans perceive them, it is likely that asylum seekers and refugees might feel victimised if they participate in these organisations. Alternatively, asylum seekers and refugees might be trying to deal with their own problems of documentation, access to services and employment and devote less attention to community concerns.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The UNHCR, jointly with the Roll Back Xenophobia Campaign, should undertake awareness campaigns that allow South Africans, and asylum seekers and refugees to exchange views and experiences about one another since stereotypes are being reproduced about each other from both sides. These campaigns should take the form of community meetings, road shows, discussions at schools, as well as at government level. It is extremely important for government officials to publicly debunk some of the myths about asylum seekers and refugees and speak positively about the contribution that asylum seekers and refugees can make to the country.

- Respondents' high level of participation in religious organisations within their communities should be taken into account in undertaking awareness campaigns. Working closely with religious organisations might allow entities such as the Roll Back Xenophobia Campaign as well as other service providers to reach a large number of asylum seekers and refugees within a setting that they feel safe and comfortable with.

- While issues of integration and community involvement were not analysed in detail in this report, the findings point to the need to conduct more in-depth research to be able to understand why respondents do not generally participate in community organisations, as well as how the negative perceptions are created and sustained despite the level of contact that exists between asylum seekers and refugees and local South Africans.